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Los Angeles County
Education Coordinating Council

Raising Educational Achievement for Foster and Probation Youth

August 14, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Sharon G. Watson 
Lead Consultant, Education Coordinating Council

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN "EXPECTING MORE; A BLUEPRINT FOR RAISING THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF FOSTER AND PROBATION YOUTH"

At its meeting on February 14, 2006, your Board approved "*Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth*," developed by the Education Coordinating Council (ECC), and instructed the ECC to report its progress in implementing the recommendations in that document to your Board every six months. Your Board also requested that, in collaboration with the Superintendent of the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), the ECC convene a meeting of school district superintendents in the County in order to provide a briefing on the Blueprint and create strategies for implementing the recommendations pertinent to the school districts.

Further, at its meeting on June 13, 2006, on motion of Supervisors Michael D. Antonovich and Zev Yaroslavsky, the ECC was asked to report back to your Board on August 15, 2006 on the development of a public/private partnership to create an electronic-based information system for individual education records of youth under the supervision of the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation (Recommendation #8 in the Blueprint). The CAO, working with the ECC, is taking the lead on reporting back on this motion, in conjunction with two earlier motions regarding a health passport for foster youth, but some additional information is provided in this report.

Blueprint Recommendations

As you will see, the ECC and its members have made significant progress in implementing the recommendations in "Expecting More." Some of the key actions taken include:

ECC:

- Launched an ECC web site: www.educationcoordinatingcouncil.org to serve as a central communication vehicle to provide key information and help agencies coordinate efforts.
- Conducted a data match between the Los Angeles County Office of Education and the Probation Department that provided demographic and academic achievement data on probation youth in juvenile hall schools, camp schools, community day schools, as well as those enrolled in the Cal Safe program for pregnant teens.
- Conducted a data match between the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and those children and youth under the supervision of DCFS and Probation that provided demographic and academic achievement information on these students, both those being served In Home and those Out of Home, in infant/early education programs, elementary, middle and high schools. These almost 11,000 DCFS and Probation youth were compared to LAUSD students overall in such areas as school type, ethnicity, gender, language classification, grade level, eligibility for special education and gifted programs, English proficiency, Mathematics proficiency, and suspension, expulsion and dropout rates.
- Requested that LAUSD perform a follow-up analysis to create a profile of the 203 foster and 89 probation youth identified as gifted and talented. At the ECC's July meeting, following the presentation of this data, an offer was made to place these gifted youth in top Los Angeles area private schools with full scholarships. The ECC is now working to identify these youth and seek the necessary departmental referrals to this community foundation.
- Helped craft and/or support key legislation offering expanded educational opportunities for foster and probation youth, including AB 2489, SB 1777 and the additional school counselors for California schools included in the approved state budget. Also helped shape LAUSD's Access for All Resolution that provides additional staff and services for foster and homeless youth.
- Obtained the signature of the Superintendent of LACOE—and are securing those of the other school superintendents who serve on the ECC—on a letter, drafted by the Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA) and the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles (CLC), outlining AB 490 regulations. Caregivers will be able to use this letter to expedite enrollment of their foster youth in these seven school districts.
- Brokered an agreement with the Beyond The Bell Branch of LAUSD that will allow foster youth who are eligible for their tutoring services, but who are not

currently enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program (a requirement for services), to sign up for their programs this coming school year.

- Added two consultants to the ECC team to serve as point people for ensuring the implementation of the recommended actions in the child and youth sections of the Blueprint. Terry Ogawa, former executive director of CCYF, will coordinate efforts in the early childhood education area, and Michelle Koenig, former director of St. Anne's Transitional Housing Program for foster and probation youth, will coordinate efforts around youth development.

City of Los Angeles:

- Conducted a first-ever survey of city departments to determine whether they give priority to foster and probation youth in their programs, how many each department serves, which programs are targeted to this population, what caregiver outreach departments conduct, what barriers exist to serving these youth, what additional outreach and services could be provided with additional capacity, and what resources would be needed to expand.
- Adopted a resolution that, with the concurrence of the Mayor, the City of Los Angeles include in its State Legislative Program SUPPORT for AB 2489 (Leno), SB 1576 (Murray), AB 2709 (Maze), and AB 2284 (Jones) to enhance educational, housing, employment, and health opportunities for foster youth.
- With the help of the CLC, recognized – for the first time – Foster Care Awareness Month with a ceremony at a special city council meeting in Van Nuys. Foster Care Heroes were honored and art produced by foster youth was displayed. The city also sponsored a month-long art exhibit of their work at City Hall and held a press conference at which students read their poetry.

Juvenile Court:

- Issued a Blanket Order on June 22, 2006, that became effective July 15, 2006, that instructs schools in Los Angeles County to provide basic educational information to DCFS and Probation caseworkers, children's attorneys, and Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs). This educational information includes: attendance records, report cards, special education and individualized education plan (IEP) records, test scores, discipline records, behavior plans, progress reports, immunization records, and any other education or pupil records maintained by a school. This order further stipulates that these records shall be released without the requirement of parental consent.

At its July meeting, the ECC agreed to convene those entities included in the Blanket Order, as well as County Counsel, to hammer out an MOU that would create a process for the sharing of these records. LAUSD has offered to host this meeting.

- Held two trainings on the Blueprint for dependency court judicial officers and attorneys, and has planned similar trainings for the delinquency court.
- The successful 317(e) protocol that provides educational advocates for the dependency court is now being revised for the delinquency court.

DCFS:

- Assembling age-appropriate standards for early childhood, school-aged children, high school, special education students, as well youth transitioning to adulthood, for parents, caregivers, and caseworkers. These standards should help clarify the department's academic and enrichment expectations and help identify for CSWs what must be documented in educational records and addressed at case conferences.
- Formed a department team to ensure that case plans include education plans and that team decision-making conferences include educational efforts and issues. Also, to increase accountability, developing management reports that highlight the educational information recorded in CWS/CMS.
- Increasing training to caregivers and CSWs on the importance of educational outcomes for foster youth and raising academic expectations.
- In collaboration with the Los Angeles County Office of Child Care, DCFS is obtaining information from early childhood education providers of available program openings for three and four-year-old children and then notifying its staff of enrollment availability in their communities. This information is also being posted on the department's internal and external websites.
- Partnering with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) on a pilot program at its Pomona office to increase the awareness and training of preschool providers regarding the needs of children and families under the department's supervision. DCFS is also providing training to that office's CSWs regarding the importance of early childhood education and how to access resources.
- A letter from DCFS' Acting Director Joan Smith is being sent this month to all parents and caregivers of three and four-year-old children under their care to encourage enrollment of their children in early childhood education/preschool programs. Information on how to access these programs and a checklist of kindergarten readiness skills will be included in the mailing.
- Planning is underway to provide increased early intervention services by utilizing the newly-created medical hubs to conduct initial developmental screenings of foster children under the age of three, followed by referrals to a Regional Center when necessary.

- Promoting and facilitating enrollment countywide in free tutoring opportunities and California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) preparatory programs through presentations at: general staff meetings, in-service trainings for caregivers, kinship community network meetings and support groups, community forums, as well as postings on LA Kids and e-mail notifications to relevant stakeholders.
- Ensuring that social workers, through its information bureau, are prompted to enter the name of the child's school in CWS/CMS so that tutoring, preparatory courses, and other programs can be accessed.
- Collaborated with LAUSD, Children Uniting Nations, and California State University at Northridge to replicate the academic mentoring program established last year at Foshay Middle School to Van Nuys High School.
- Making contractual progress on its plan to secure an educational consultant for each regional office by January 1, 2007. These consultants will further assist the department implement the Blueprint recommendations, navigate school systems and address challenging educational issues faced by its youth.

Probation:

- Referring pregnant and parenting female probationers in need of child care to DCFS's Child Care Assistance program. New Pregnant and Parenting Teen Program participants are now being provided information on State Preschool, Head Start and LAUP early childhood education programs.
- Beginning next month, the Residential Treatment Services Bureau and LACOE will conduct a series of "transition open house" meetings with parents/guardians at camp facilities to provide information on transitioning their children to the appropriate educational setting once they are released from Camp. Camp aftercare staff will facilitate parent/guardian connections with the appropriate school setting, including making initial telephonic contact with the identified school site, expediting enrollment, and easing the youth's transition. Structured monitoring of parents of high-risk/high-need youth released from Camp will assist them with scheduling study-times, sleep-times, and wake-up times to help their children attend school.
- Expanded the Library Card Initiative passed by your Board in December, giving library cards not only to all youth in juvenile halls and camps, but to all youth on probation or at risk of becoming so. This enables them to access free Internet-based tutoring for grades 4 through 12.
- Providing a series of after-school enrichment opportunities that includes: a year-round Youth Employment Program for probation and at-risk youth at various Los Angeles City park sites through the Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) program; faith-based mentoring and life skills coaching for males

graduating from Camp through the West Angeles Church of God Ten Point Initiative; cognitive-based anger management and effective decision-making programs at two JJCPA Cluster 2 sites in South Los Angeles; and an annual JJCPA Annual Summer Basketball Camp that includes sessions on health, personal empowerment and scholastic achievement.

- Holding quarterly parent empowerment meetings at several high risk JJCPA School-Based Supervision Program sites that engage, empower and encourage parents/guardians to become more involved in the academic process, including homework, attendance and academic monitoring. Parents/guardians are introduced to evidence-based strategies and interventions that underscore the importance of setting clear, positive standards that provide youth with opportunities to contribute to their families and communities and recognizing them for these contributions. In addition, school officials present participants with information regarding resources and options, and community-based organizations identify available programs that give them an opportunity to spend meaningful time with their children.
- Building school collaborations to ensure safe passages to and from high-risk school sites. Working with the sheriff's department, the county's Human Relations Commission, and several school superintendents and principals to develop contingency plans and establish a team of youth advocates who can intervene in potentially dangerous situations. In addition, Gang Intervention community-based organizations will work to duplicate these safe passage efforts at Continuation and Community Day School settings. Parents and guardians will be engaged to assist with racial tensions and random acts of violence in the areas around these school campuses.
- Exploring the idea of co-locating LACOE, LAUSD and Probation staff (and possibly DCFS) at a dedicated site.
- JJCPA school-based probation officers and multi-systemic and family therapy interventionists are moving toward mid-year and year-end case planning meetings that review short term and long term educational goals with parents/guardians and youth. Additionally, these personnel will help train DPOs on advocacy and how to provide supportive services to parents/guardians.

Department of Mental Health:

- Implementing its Prenatal to Five (P25) Program, established to promote the delivery of effective family-centered and culturally-responsive mental health services and supports for young children and their families, in the County's SPAs. SPA 4's Project ABC (About Building Connections for Young Children & Families), for example, in addition to providing core mental health services, is identifying and coordinating a broad array of community-based services. These include primary care, nutrition, early developmental education and child care

services, family support, family mental health, and substance abuse treatment services. Approximately 500 young children and families will be enrolled during the six-year program.

- Trainings have been held countywide and in various SPAs on such topics as: Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Development Disorders of Infant and Early Childhood; Infant Mental Health and Child Welfare Issues: Four Common Problems and their Solutions within the Child Welfare System; Importance of Early Attachment: Relationships and Resilience in the Development of the Brain; Ages and Stages Questionnaire & PEDS Child Development Screening Training; Parent-Child Interaction Therapy and Mental Health, Developmental, Social/Emotional Well-Being, and Prevention and Early Intervention for 0-5 year olds in the Child Welfare System.
- Staff participated in CLC's Foster Youth Mental Health Summit and serve on First 5 LA's Prenatal to Three Focus Policy Roundtable and on CLC's Pregnant and Parenting Teens Workgroup.
- School-based mental health services coordinators in each SPA conducted "case study" reviews for selected mental health providers to identify: 1) clients who are foster or probation youth, 2) their presenting problems/issues, 3) mental health interventions and student/family community support services provided, and 4) specific child/youth and family/caregiver outcomes that contributed to school success. In addition to significant improvements in their socio-emotional problems, the interventions provided to these youth contributed to higher levels of academic achievement, special awards, increased attendance, more successful peer interaction, better socialization skills, greater participation in student government, school-sponsored athletics and social activities, and higher numbers in accelerated learning programs, graduating from high school, and attending college.
- Working to make educational achievement one of the mandatory recorded outcomes for Mental Health Services Act contracts.

LACOE:

- Sponsored AB 1777, a three-county pilot program for 2000 youth who have moved from foster care to the delinquency system that will provide a transition counselor for six months after their release from court schools into permanent placement, thus assuring their connection to a significant adult who will support their education.
- Continuing to work on expediting the transfer of school records for foster and probation youth.

- Asking school districts to give foster and probation youth priority for enrichment programs such as the Homework Hotline, Title I Training and other academic activities.
- In partnership with LAUSD, will convene the school district Education Liaisons next month to update them on recent legislation affecting foster and probation youth, and assist them with the challenges they are facing serving these youth.

ACHSA:

- Compiled a list of free and low-cost tutoring resources for its 80+ member agencies to use for the children and youth they serve.
- Sponsored a training on educational advocacy skills for its member agency staff.
- Worked with DCFS to make certain that caregivers and community-based agency staff are included in its team decision-making meetings.
- Supported the inclusion of a performance measure in group home and FFA contracts that tracks the number of children and youth agencies are able to enroll in school.

Community Agencies:

- St. Anne's is opening its New Village Charter School specifically for young women in the foster care and probation systems. The school will open September 6, 2006 with 80 ninth- and tenth-graders. Eleventh and twelfth grades will be added in subsequent years, with room for more than 200 students in all.
- Cedars-Sinai Medical Center is reaching out to foster and probation youth to involve them in their outpatient services programs, as well as in the inpatient services they offer to transition-aged youth. They are particularly interested in enrolling DCFS children, who are in the process of reunification or adoption, in a program they have for young children experiencing attachment issues. This program could be very helpful in minimizing placement failures.
- The Fulfillment Fund has a college access program for disadvantaged youth that would welcome foster and probation youth. Small learning communities at Crenshaw, Locke, and Manual Arts High Schools have high populations of foster youth, and the Fulfillment Fund would like to partner with the ECC as it explores how best to serve them.
- Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic provides audio textbooks for the K-12 curriculum and, for the past decade, has also been serving the learning-disabled population. As many foster and probation youth would benefit from its programs,

RFB&D would like to work with ECC members to expand its services to additional school districts beyond the 22 they are currently serving.

Electronic Education Record (Blueprint Recommendation #8)

As directed by your Board on June 13, 2006, the ECC established a public-private partnership to oversee the development of an electronic education record for foster and probation youth. At its July 27, 2006 meeting, the ECC—itself a public-private partnership of major school districts, county departments, the juvenile court, city and county children's commissions, First 5 LA, advocacy organizations, youth and their caregivers—agreed to serve as the oversight body for the development of an education passport. It also created a Resource Partnership to assist in its design. That Partnership includes many of the same groups that sit on the ECC, along with the CAO, Health Services, County Counsel, the CIO, Children's Action Network (CAN), Violence Prevention Program (VIP) and others. Resource Partnership members will be used to resolve confidentiality barriers, finalize the education data elements, determine the user groups and what information each needs to access and other design issues.

The ECC endorsed several strategies for moving forward:

- Build on past and existing efforts, particularly the recent work by CAN and VIP to make foster youth health and mental health information available electronically to service providers at DCFS's LAC+USC Hub.
- Begin identifying data elements from the CAO Service Integration Branch's HELIX project, recent data matches between school districts and county departments, and other such sources that can be legally shared.
- Rather than starting a parallel system, pilot the addition of educational information at the LAC+USC medical Hub, beginning with one or more high schools and their feeder middle schools in that catchment area.

In addition, the ECC is meeting with the vendor that designed the electronic health/mental health record system for VIP and that is also being looked at by CAN for their project, to see if education information could be added to that system server and what the estimated costs would be.

Meeting with School Superintendents

On April 19, 2006, the ECC and LACOE convened a meeting between the county departments represented on the ECC and the superintendents of school districts across the County. Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Michael Nash, DCFS Director David Sanders, Probation Department representative Jitahadi Imara and DMH representative William Arroyo represented the County and, although the meeting date coincided with spring break for about one-third of school districts, representative of 22 school districts

participated. This was the first meeting of its kind to be held in the County. Demographic and academic performance information on foster and probation youth was presented, along with the Blueprint recommendations, and each county department summarized the key actions they were taking to implement the Blueprint. A dialogue with the superintendents identified some of the barriers they are facing with respect to educating these youth and generated some ideas for moving forward. Several agreements were reached, including ways to create a positive school climate for these youth, the use of school facilities for after-school programs and other supervised activities run jointly with other agencies, the need for cross-district agreement on the minimum documentation required for enrollment and for districts to give the records of foster and probation youth priority handling. The Antelope Valley Union High School District and Pomona Unified School District invited DCFS to co-locate staff on their school campuses.

It was also agreed that this type of meeting was very valuable and that they should be held on a semi-annual basis. The next one is scheduled for October 13, 2006, a time when most schools are in session.

In summary, the ECC members are working hard, both individually and jointly, to make the Blueprint a reality, as are a host of community agencies. The ECC looks forward to reporting further progress in its next report. If you should have any questions or require further information, your staff may contact the ECC at (213) 974-4530.

cc: Chief Administrative Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Acting Director, Children and Family Services
Chief Probation Officer
Director, Mental Health
Superintendent, Office of Education
Education Coordinating Council



Los Angeles County
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Raising Educational Achievement for Foster and Probation Youth

August 14, 2007

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
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From: Sharon G. Watson 
Lead Consultant, Education Coordinating Council

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At its meeting on February 14, 2006, your Board approved “*Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth*,” developed by the Education Coordinating Council (ECC), and instructed the ECC to report its progress in implementing the recommendations in that document to your Board every six months. The first Progress Report was delivered to your Board on August 14, 2006 and the second on February 14, 2007; this is now the third report.

The ECC has made great strides in implementing the recommendations in *Expecting More* during the first half of 2007 and thanks your Board and the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation for the significant financial support that made this progress possible. As you will see below and in the attached report from the Probation Department, much is being accomplished in the quest to raise the academic performance of children and youth under the supervision of DCFS and Probation, especially in those areas requiring inter-departmental and/or inter-sector collaboration.

Accomplishments since the last Progress Report in February, 2007 include:

ECC Operations:

- Received a grant of \$450,000 from the W.M. Keck Foundation on July 6, for fiscal years 2007-08 and 2008-09, to help implement the Blueprint recommendations
- Submitted a full grant proposal to the Weingart Foundation for \$200,000 for fiscal years 2007-08 and 2008-09 to implement the Blueprint recommendations. The Foundation’s Board of Directors will consider this request at its November meeting.

- Met with several members of the Los Angeles County Grand Jury on March 19 to discuss data and information-sharing issues and shared the LAUSD, LACOE and Pasadena USD data match results with them.
- Incorporated the ECC's Blueprint Recommendation #3 (Increasing participation in after-school and summer enrichment programs) as an objective in the LA County Strategic Plan
- Collaborated with the Children's Planning Council to develop, at the Board's request, a set of "hard-hitting" recommendations for reforming the county's juvenile justice system, including the strengthening of education programs for youth in juvenile halls and camps.

Data and Information-Sharing:

- Following a clarification by the U.S. Department of Education, LACOE has determined that it is now able to freely share educational information and records on probation students with probation officers without first obtaining parental consent.
- Facilitated data matches between Lancaster School District, Pomona USD and Long Beach USD students and both DCFS and Probation youth. Results will be presented to the ECC in October.
- LAUSD, LACOE and Probation are piloting a joint electronic education record-sharing program for probation students to facilitate the transition of camp youth back into district schools.
- LAUSD has automated its education record system to allow district records to be readily forwarded among district schools.
- LAUSD is working to amend its Directory Information List, by April 2009, to include DCFS, Probation, Mental Health and other city and county departments. This will allow the district to share student data—name, address, date of birth, dates of attendance, and previous school history—with all of these entities unless the student's parents opt out, and will greatly facilitate the ability to connect foster and probation youth with essential services and supports.
- Working with the Probation Department to train Supervising DPOs and their staff on how to use the Student Record Request Form, adopted by the ECC in January, now that LACOE is able to readily share its educational information with Probation. Training will also be developed for CASAs and children's attorneys.
- In partnership with the Children's Action Network, Casey Family Programs, the Commission on Children and Families and the California Education Collaborative for Children in Foster Care, working with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to secure permission for Los Angeles County to create an electronic-based educational record system for DCFS and probation students.

Early Childhood Education:

- The Steps to Excellence Quality Rating Program (STEPS) was successfully launched on June 22, 2007, which will pilot implementation of the quality rating instruments for child care programs developed by the Policy Roundtable for Child Care. Providers in designated areas cities and neighborhoods) began submitting letters of intent in July.
- The Los Angeles County Office of Child Care, City of Santa Monica and Connections for Children have agreed to implement a tiered reimbursement rate system for child care providers based on the STEPS program quality rating scale, as their providers move through the rating process. This would be the first tiered reimbursement rate model in the State. Over the next three years, approximately \$3 million will be used to reimburse child care providers (both centers and family child care homes) in the Santa Monica area under this pilot program.
- A central phone line for contacting all ten Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R) Agencies in the county has now been established. The new Los Angeles County R&R Consumer Education Line (888-92-CHILD) will connect callers to the appropriate R&R agency for the zip code requested.
- The Atlas Foundation, Zero to Three and CASA are working with the ECC to establish a training program for CASA volunteers on the unique needs of young DCFS children, ages 0-3.
- The ECC's Early Childhood Education Workgroup is preparing a report that outlines the potential benefits gained from bringing high-quality early childhood education, family support and related services to young children involved with DCFS and to the children of foster and probation youth. This report, to be presented to the ECC in October, will include data on all children under the age of 6 associated with DCFS and the children of DCFS and probation youth, as well as the availability of early childhood education/child care resources for them.
- With First5LA and LAUP, presented information to the ACHSA Strategic Planning Committee on the availability of preschool resources for children associated with the child welfare system and how FFAs may access child care services for the children in their care. An article highlighting resource and referral agencies and preschool services will be included in ACHSA's upcoming member newsletter.
- Partnering with LAUSD to ensure that its Guidelines for School Enrollment of Students Associated with the Child Welfare and/or Probation Systems are applied across all District programs and that children associated with DCFS and Probation have access to the early childhood education, special education, and early intervention services offered by LAUSD.
- DCFS is now implementing its Service Planning Area-based Prevention Initiative to improve the overall conditions of communities and build on the strength of families. This initiative, now aligned with the County's Healthier Communities, Stronger Families and Thriving Children Initiative that targets four geographic areas, will ensure a broad

range of community-based activities, including efforts to increase access to affordable, quality child care and access to educational and recreational after-school programs.

Youth Development

- DCFS hired and trained (with the help of the Children's Law Center and the Juvenile Court) 15 education consultants to assist that department's efforts to fully implement the Blueprint recommendations at the regional office level. These consultants are helping social workers to navigate school systems and address the challenging education issues faced by department youth.
- Probation has increased the number of school-based probation officers to 120.
- Partnered with the Probation Department to fund (through the Neil McDowell Trust), develop and administer a higher education scholarship program for probation youth. The first four scholarships were awarded to youth participating in the "Success is Our Future" banquet on May 17.
- A pilot project has been established between the DCFS Metro office in SPA 4 and LAUSD to significantly increase the number of foster youth with grade point averages of at least 2.8, in order to qualify them for \$5000 scholarships for their continuing education. Potentially eligible students are being identified and services wrapped around them to enable them to qualify for these grants.
- The City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles Police Department, Probation, and LAUSD have created 24 safe school collaboratives which align local efforts to create safer schools and safer passages to and from schools.
- The Children's Law Center, Alliance for Children's Rights, ACHSA, DCFS, Probation and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce worked together to include 45 foster youth in the 1st Annual Job Shadow Day, as part of the County's Foster Awareness Campaign in May. Youth were able to Job Shadow in the offices of Supervisors Antonovich, Knabe and Yaroslavsky, Mayor Villaraigosa, Assemblymember Karen Bass, LAUSD and a number of other public and private organizations/companies.
- The Los Angeles Youth Transition Action Team led a collaborative effort with Probation, DCFS and the City of Los Angeles Community Development Department to increase the participation of foster and probation youth in this year's Summer Youth Employment Program. Only 43 system youth participated in this program in 2006. The results of this outreach effort will be available in September.
- Public Counsel Law Center launched an Emancipating Youth Program to address the unmet educational, health, and social service needs of transitioning youth by employing direct legal services, education, and outreach.
- DMH rolled out its Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Full Service Partnership for Transition Age Youth. Navigation teams pairing an outreach specialist with a clinician are positioned throughout the county, with one team assigned to each SPA and 5 teams in juvenile camps. This program, designed for youth ages 16-25, addresses emotional,

housing, physical health, transportation, educational opportunities, and other needs that will help these youth function independently in the community.

- The Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect and DCFS, with assistance from the Probation Department, Los Angeles Mentoring Model Coalition, MPLAY, ACHSA, Commission for Children and Families and the Center for Applied Research Solutions, developed new guidelines for mentoring programs, as well as an instructional video (“Hand to Hand”) to help increase the number of mentor matches for youth in care.
- Over 150 people participated in DCFS’s first annual mentoring summit that trained staff, caregivers, and community partners on the effects of trauma on brain development.
- The DCFS Torrance office, Probation, Children Uniting Nations, and 11 Community based organizations created the South Bay Community Partnership to increase the numbers of foster and probation youth matched with mentors.
- Children Uniting Nations, in collaboration with DCFS and LAUSD, expanded its school-based academic mentoring programs to include John Muir Middle school.
- Created a Youth Development Work Group, composed of 20 diverse agencies/organizations, to recommend actions that the ECC can take to facilitate the participation of DCFS and Probation youth in after-school, off-track and summer skill-building and enrichment programs that provide opportunities to connect to nurturing adults (Blueprint Recommendation #3). Four focus groups were held in June and July with youth, resource families, relative caregivers and congregate care providers in SPAs 3, 4 and 8. The findings were then presented to the Youth Development Work Group at its first meeting in mid-July.

School-Based Support:

- Partnering with LAUSD Superintendent David Brewer and the SEED Foundation to plan at least one residential academy for system and other at-risk youth in Los Angeles, using the model developed by the ECC in 2005 at the Board’s request. Helped create the California Academies for Residential Education (CARE) group to work with other counties (Sacramento, Orange, and Santa Barbara) on statewide strategies and effective California program initiatives
- Probation has instructed its school-based probation officers to reach out to and assist DCFS students at their assigned schools, and DCFS has followed suit with the same policy for its school-based staff.
- Worked with LAUSD, DCFS and Probation on a training component for school staff (superintendents, principals, deans, school counselors, front office staff, etc.) on the needs of foster and probation youth. 800 school-based advocates have been trained on this curriculum to date.
- DMH has worked with school districts to create new identifiers for children and youth with mental health issues. These identifiers are now in place.

- LAUSD established a California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) Boot Camp in order to assist foster, probation, and other at-risk youth with passing the CAHSEE and graduating from high school.
- As a result of the success of the transition open house meetings with parents and guardians at camp facilities, LACOE, Probation, and LAUSD are developing a formal policy and better protocols to facilitate the successful transition of probation students from camp back into LAUSD schools. LACOE educational facilitators in each camp will look at the educational, special education and mental health needs of each youth, review that information with LAUSD liaisons and, together with the youth's parents, design a plan for providing a network of services upon release—including, ideally, returning youth to their home schools and communities. The Probation Department will provide the release dates to LACOE and LAUSD one month prior to these youth leaving camp and returning to their neighborhood schools to facilitate this process. Five counselors in LAUSD's camp returnee program have responsibility for supporting these transitions and functioning as case managers to prepare schools for these youths' enrollment.
- The Keppel Union School district and Pomona USD superintendents have joined LACOE, Lancaster, Long Beach, Los Angeles, and Pasadena in signing a letter outlining AB 490 regulations to help caregivers expedite the enrollment of their foster youth in school.
- Following the release of a letter from Jack O'Connell, the state superintendent of public instruction, outlining the legal responsibilities school districts have for granting and transferring partial course credits, LACOE offered to convene the seven school districts on the ECC to develop and adopt uniform procedures for the transfer and acceptance of all (both partial and full) course credits. These procedures will then be presented to the other school districts in Los Angeles County for their consideration at the next School Superintendent's Meeting scheduled for November.

In summary, ECC members, partners and community organizations are successfully making *Expecting More* a reality and the Council looks forward to reporting further progress in its next report. If you should have any questions or require any additional information, your staff may contact the ECC at: (213) 974-5967.

Attachment: August 7, 2007 Probation Department Memo

cc: Chief Executive Officer
 Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
 Director, Children and Family Services
 Chief Probation Officer
 Director, Mental Health
 Superintendent, Office of Education
 Education Coordinating Council



ROBERT B. TAYLOR
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

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August 7, 2007

TO: Sharon Watson
Education Coordinating Council

FROM: Jitahadi Imara, Acting Deputy Director
Probation Department

SUBJECT: **PROGRESS MADE BY THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECC BLUEPRINT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Probation Department continues make progress toward achieving the vision and goals of the ECC Blueprint, including its Seven Basic Agreements and twelve program and accountability recommendations for improving the educational achievement of our youth.

The following is an update in our efforts to implement the ECC Blueprint (for inclusion in the Board letter due on August 14, 2007).

Library Card Initiative

On December 20, 2005, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors directed the Probation Department, the Los Angeles County Library, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education to develop a plan to provide each student in Los Angeles County Probation camps and halls with a library card. On January 18, 2006, the above-mentioned departments developed a proposal to provide the library cards to the youth, in an effort to demonstrate the importance of library services and resources.

Pursuant to the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisor's Library Motion, the Probation Department, County Library and the Office of Education have worked in collaboration to issue 2,015 library cards to probation youth since the program's implementation.

The Detention Services Bureau has expanded the program to Barry J. Nidorf, Central, and Los Padrinos Juvenile Halls. Through the family resource centers, located in the juvenile halls, Detention Services Bureau staff refer the youth and their parents to current services offered at their local County library. The services offered include parent education, self-help instruction, English as a Second Language (ESL) Group

Instruction and Community Advisory Groups. This is done in an effort to encourage families to utilize the library as a resource for promoting a healthy family lifestyle while encouraging family literacy.

The Residential Treatment Services Bureau has expanded the program to Camps Kilpatrick and Miller. Probation Officers at these camps have coordinated efforts with Operation Read community workers and tutors to encourage youth to use library resources and to facilitate special reading projects and activities, as well as the use of Live Homework Help, a web-based tutoring library program.

The Juvenile Field Bureaus have provided a continuum of this motion to minors on probation in the community. JJCPA Staff received training on services and resources available through the County Libraries with the goal to provide each youth and family with library cards and information on services/programs and encourage youth/family involvement in library activities (i.e. summer reading program, on-line tutorial program, on-line research access, etc.). Implementation of the Library Card Initiative resulted in JJCPA staff conducting parent empowerment workshops at local libraries to introduce parents to library resources, field trips and mother/daughter activities at local libraries and over 80% of JJCPA youth with issued library cards. Additionally, Field Officers from the Centinela Area Office have arranged orientations and tours of the local County library for the youth under their supervision. In addition, youth have been encouraged to check out books and provide book reports to their Probation Officers.

Operation READ

Operation READ is a tutoring for youth program at the halls, camps, and in partnership with community-based organizations, throughout the County of Los Angeles community. The program goals are to build the youth's literacy skills to include reading, comprehension, writing, and spelling. As the ability to read and to comprehend what one reads is fundamental to make informed choices and gain academic and career success, Operation READ sought new resources.

The Descriptive Reading Series computer software, a proven diagnostic and prescriptive program for comprehension development designed specifically for youth was recently added to the Operation READ Program. It has four levels, with emphasis on identifying the details, fact and opinion, inference, main idea, sequence, and vocabulary. Based on the systems pretest, the youth is placed at a level to build his or her skills. A report is produced for the tutor each time the youth uses the program. Worksheets have been provided to assist the tutor, as the youth develops skills to master each section and move on to a higher level of comprehension.

After-School Enrichment and Supervision Program

The JJCPA After-School Enrichment Program is part of the larger prevention and intervention strategy outlined in Los Angeles County's Local Action Plan. The program is located in parks in high need and high crime areas which are near JJCPA School-Based and Housing-Based sites. A central focus of the After-School Enrichment Program is to enhance the quality of life for family who reside near the program sites.

To ensure that families and youth could participate in the program activities free of gang intimidation and violence, local law enforcement agencies partnered with the parks and Probation Department to curtail gang activity, crime and gun violence around or in the

proximity of the targeted JJCPA parks sites and school and housing developments connected to the parks. Law enforcement activities include but are not limited to the following: providing youth outreach, offering extra patrols, increasing uniform presence, conducting curfew and truancy sweeps, suppressing gang activity, enforcing narcotic violations, decreasing Alcohol and Beverage Control (ABC) violations, preventing drive-by-shootings, curtailing illegal weapons possession and sales violations. This collaborative after-school partnership program has resulted in:

- Creation of safety zones or harbors of safe refuge for participant youth and their families.
- Increased county and city law enforcement and educational resources for JJCPA park sites.
- Targeted efforts by law enforcement to ensure that JJCPA youth are free of gang activity and violence.
- Weekly bilingual parent support and empowerment meetings designed to engage, empower, and encourage parents to become more involved in safe passage efforts, community, academic, and social enrichment activities with their children.
- Quarterly parent engagement workshops that provide skill building opportunities that assist parents to enhance monitoring and communication skills.
- Several town hall meetings to raise community and parent awareness around the role of parent in reducing local crime. Topics included Parent/Neighborhood Watch, After-School safe passages, and gang intervention partnerships.
- Bi-Monthly meetings with active and inactive gang members to discuss intervention strategies designed to curb gang recruitment and acts of violence. These meetings have resulted in gang members agreeing to designate the park as a safe zone for youth and family attending after-school enrichment activities. Additionally, adult gang members hosted several meetings with parents in the community to discuss effective peer monitoring, and anti bullying strategies.
- Integration of literacy services through the local library, Probation Department's Operation Read Program (parents provides some of the literacy services and supervision) and Drumming for Life reading program.
- Family and individual counseling resources provided to target families with low parental bonding and high family conflict risk factors.
- Anger management resources that target high risk youth, aiding them in understanding their personal triggers that result in delinquent/violent behavior, and/or poor decision making.
- Community/graffiti cleanup that involved parents and youth to remove gang writing and trash to make the park more user friendly and attractive for families visiting the park.
- Skill building and recreation activities designed to expose youth to career and recreational options (i.e. scuba diving, refereeing, life guard/water safety activities, park ranger, white water rafting, sportsmanship camps, etc.).

Jl:sh

C: Sharon Harada
Felicia Cotton




Los Angeles County
Education Coordinating Council

Raising Educational Achievement for Foster and Probation Youth

February 14, 2007

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Sharon G. Watson 
Lead Consultant, Education Coordinating Council

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN “*EXPECTING MORE; A BLUEPRINT FOR RAISING THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF FOSTER AND PROBATION YOUTH*”

At its meeting on February 14, 2006, your Board approved “*Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth*,” developed by the Education Coordinating Council (ECC), and instructed the ECC to report its progress in implementing the recommendations in that document to your Board every six months. The first Progress Report was delivered on August 14, 2006; this is now the second report.

As you will see in the attached Annual Report, the ECC and its members have made significant progress in implementing the recommendations in “Expecting More” during 2006. Some of the key accomplishments include:

- DCFS is partnering with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) on a pilot program at the department’s Pomona office to increase the awareness and training of preschool providers about the needs of children and families under the department’s supervision. Training is also being provided to that office’s social workers on the importance of early childhood education and how to access those resources.
- The Department of Mental Health (DMH) is implementing a Prenatal to Five (P25) program to promote the delivery of effective family-centered and culturally-responsive mental health services and supports for young children and their families within the County’s SPAs.
- Obtained the signatures of the superintendents of five ECC-member school districts—Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and the Lancaster, Long Beach, Los Angeles and Pasadena school districts--on a letter, drafted by the Association of

Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA) and the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles, outlining AB 490 regulations. This letter was created at the request of DCFS and the Performance Measures Task Group, and caregivers are now successfully using this letter to expedite enrollment of their foster youth in these school districts.

- Probation expanded its Library Card Initiative to include all youth on probation--or at risk of becoming so--to enable them to access free internet-based tutoring for grades 4 through 12. The department is also providing a series of after-school enrichment opportunities that includes a year-round youth employment program for probation and at-risk youth at various Los Angeles City park sites and is piloting its innovative Students for Higher Education Program, described in the attached February 7, 2007 memo, for 50 youth at Camp Gonzalez.
- LAUSD has, as of this month, appointed foster youth advocates at 350 of its schools, and is holding a training session in April for another group of recruits.
- Long Beach USD launched a school and community mentoring program that matches youth with administrators and counselors to motivate them to do better in school and established a foster youth partnership with Long Beach City College.

In addition, at the ECC's quarterly meeting on January 29, 2007, the Council ratified an historic Collaborative Agreement and process for sharing educational information among ECC member organizations and its partner agencies. This Agreement will facilitate the development of the electronic education record for foster and probation youth that is proposed in *Expecting More* and that is needed to fully implement several of the other recommendations in that report.

Finally, a second ECC Dialogue with school superintendents was held on February 5, 2007, co-hosted with the Los Angeles County Office of Education. 24 school districts participated, with a palpable sense of excitement about the opportunities for working more closely together and with the ECC to raise the academic achievement of system youth. Several agreements were reached to further coordinate activities and some promising ideas were proposed to further expedite school enrollment, improve communication by designating specific contact people between schools and county departments, and initiate regional level dialogues among schools and providers to develop solutions to local concerns.

In summary, ECC members, partners and community agencies are successfully making the Blueprint a reality and the Council looks forward to reporting further progress in its next report. If you should have any questions or require further information, your staff may contact the ECC at (213) 974-4530.

Attachments: Education Coordinating Council 2006 Annual Report
February 7, 2007 Probation Department Memo

cc: Chief Administrative Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Director, Children and Family Services
Chief Probation Officer
Director, Mental Health
Superintendent, Office of Education
Education Coordinating Council



2006 Annual Report

The Education Coordinating Council began its second year by submitting *Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth* to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in February. It received the Board's unanimous approval. The remainder of 2006 was devoted to working with ECC members and a host of public and private partners and community agencies to start implementing the Blueprint recommendations.

Major implementation actions included:

Raising Awareness of the Blueprint and its Recommendations

- The ECC published and distributed 750 copies of its *Through Their Eyes* report, which presents the results of 12 youth and adult caregiver focus groups on the education of youth in the foster care and probation systems.
- The ECC published and distributed 600 copies of *Expecting More*.
- ECC representatives presented information about the Blueprint at over a dozen meetings and conferences of the following organizations: the Los Angeles County Children's Planning Council, the California Education Collaborative for Children in Foster Care's design team, the City of Los Angeles's Audits and Governmental Efficiency Committee, Los Angeles County's Commission for Children and Families, the City of Los Angeles's Interagency Team4Kids, the Grantmakers for Children, Youth & Families annual conference, the Children Uniting Nations/USC's "Keeping the Promise to At-Risk Youth" annual conference, and the Casey Family Programs/National Governor's Association's "Roundtable on Putting Data to Work to Improve Child Well-Being." The ECC also participated in the City of Los Angeles's Department of Cultural Affairs "Art Matters" conference and the mayor's education leadership retreat.
- The juvenile court held trainings on the Blueprint for both dependency and delinquency court judicial officers and attorneys, and published an article on the Blueprint in the spring 2006 issue of its PARTNERS newsletter.

Tools and Supports

- The ECC website was launched in January to serve as a central communication vehicle. It includes information about the organization and its current activities, meeting notices and minutes, ECC reports, educational resources, and links to other websites.

- The ECC assisted California's Select Committee on Foster Care to craft several pieces of legislation that would provide increased educational resources for foster youth, such as grant tuition/fee waivers for foster youth at state colleges and universities and expanding the Guardian Scholars and other college support programs. It also worked with the Los Angeles Education Foundation to help shape legislation to fund additional educational services in juvenile court schools, transition services for probation youth, and vocational training opportunities. Additionally, it supported budget adjustments that resulted in \$200 million for additional school counselors, \$22.5 million for reducing county social worker caseloads and establishing new mentoring programs for system youth, and another \$4 million for expanding the Los Angeles County Office of Education's Foster Youth Services program.
- The ECC conducted a data match between the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and the departments of Children and Family Services and Probation that provided aggregate demographic and academic achievement information on system youth, and identified which infant/early education programs and elementary, middle, and high schools they attend. LAUSD also performed a follow-up analysis to create a profile of the 203 foster and 89 probation youth identified as gifted and talented.
- Based on the LAUSD data match, Healthy City mapped the location of foster and probation youth by city council district, indicating what city resources are available for these youth in each district.
- The ECC also conducted a data match between the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) and the Probation Department that provided demographic and academic achievement data on probation youth in juvenile hall schools, camp schools, and community day schools, as well as those enrolled in the Cal Safe program for pregnant teens.
- Additional funding for the ECC was secured from the Board of Supervisors, DCFS, Probation, and the Interagency Operations Group (IOG), as well as a two-year grant from The California Community Foundation.
- Three members were added to the ECC consultant team: Terry Ogawa to coordinate the early childhood development recommendations, Michelle Koenig to coordinate the youth development recommendations, and Becki Nadybal to provide technical assistance for the data and information-sharing recommendations.

Early Childhood Education

- The Policy Roundtable for Child Care is in the process of launching the child care program quality rating system referred to in *Expecting More*. Six sites have been identified and it is anticipated that the system will begin operations in July 2007.
- The director of DCFS sent a letter to the parents and caregivers of all three- and four-year-old children under its supervision that encouraged their enrollment in early childhood education/preschool programs, provided information on how to access these programs, and included a checklist of kindergarten readiness skills. With the help of the Los Angeles County Office of Child Care, the department obtained information from early childhood edu-

cation providers regarding available program openings for these children, and notified its staff of enrollment availability in their communities.

- DCFS is partnering with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) on a pilot program at the department's Pomona office to increase awareness and training among preschool providers about the needs of children and families under the department's supervision. Training is also being provided to that office's social workers on the importance of early childhood education and how to access resources.
- To assist parents, caregivers, and caseworkers, DCFS has assembled age-appropriate standards for early childhood and for school-aged, high school, and special education students, as well as for youth transitioning to adulthood.
- The Probation Department has begun referring pregnant and parenting female probationers in need of child care to DCFS's Child Care Assistance program. New participants in the pregnant and parenting teen program are also being provided information on State Preschool, Head Start, and LAUP early childhood education programs.
- The Department of Mental Health (DMH) is implementing a Prenatal to Five (P25) program to promote the delivery of effective family-centered and culturally responsive mental health services and supports for young children and their families within the county's service planning areas. For example, SPA 4's Project ABC (About Building Connections) will provide comprehensive mental health services to families with children from birth to age five who are either already in or at risk of entering the child welfare system. Approximately 500 young children and families will be enrolled during this six-year program.

Youth Development

- Obtained the signatures of the superintendents of five ECC-member school districts—LACOE, Lancaster, Long Beach, Los Angeles, and Pasadena—on a letter, drafted by the Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA) and the Children's Law Center of Los Angeles, outlining AB 490 regulations. This letter was created at the request of DCFS and the Performance Measures Task Group, and caregivers are now successfully using it to expedite the enrollment of their foster youth in these school districts.
- ACHSA has compiled a list of free and low-cost tutoring resources for its member agencies to use in serving the foster and probation youth in their care.
- DCFS has been actively promoting and facilitating the enrollment of its youth in free tutoring and California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) preparatory programs, and is ensuring that social workers are prompted to enter school names in the department's electronic record system so that foster children can be better connected to tutoring, preparatory courses, and other enrichment programs.
- DCFS has expanded its education and mentoring units and consolidated them into one organizational division to provide more integrated program planning and service delivery. It is now in the process of hiring an educational consultant for each regional office to further assist the

department's efforts to fully implement the Blueprint recommendations, navigate school systems, and address the challenging educational issues faced by department youth.

- The Probation Department is holding quarterly parent empowerment meetings at several school-based supervision program sites that engage, empower, and encourage parents and guardians to become more involved in the academic process, including monitoring youth's homework, attendance, and academic performance. Probation is also working with LACOE to conduct a series of "transition open house" meetings with parents and guardians at camp facilities to provide information on transitioning their children to appropriate educational settings once they are released from camp.
- Probation expanded its library card initiative to include all youth on probation—or at risk of becoming so—to enable them to access free Internet-based tutoring for grades 4 through 12. The department is also providing a series of after-school enrichment opportunities that includes a year-round youth employment program for probation and at-risk youth at various Los Angeles city park sites, faith-based mentoring and life skills coaching, anger management and decision-making programs, and an annual summer basketball camp that includes sessions on health, personal empowerment, and scholastic achievement.
- LACOE has asked school districts to give foster and probation youth priority for enrichment programs such as the live homework help program, Title I training, and other academic activities.
- In September, St. Anne's opened its New Village Charter School for young women in the foster care and probation systems, beginning with 80 ninth- and tenth-graders. Grades 11 and 12 will be added in subsequent years, for a total of 200 students.

Data and Information-Sharing

- The Juvenile Court issued a blanket order, effective July 15, mandating the sharing of basic educational information between schools and DCFS and Probation caseworkers, children's attorneys, and court-appointed special advocates (CASAs). A process for requesting educational records was developed by those named in the order, LACOE, and LAUSD, and will be shared with other school districts at the school superintendents' meeting in February 2007.
- The City of Los Angeles conducted a first-ever survey of city departments to determine whether they give priority to foster and probation youth in their programs, how many each department serves, which programs target this population, what caregiver outreach they conduct, what barriers exist to serving these youth, what additional outreach and services could be provided with additional capacity, and what resources would be needed to expand.
- On June 13, the Board of Supervisors asked the ECC to create a public/private partnership to oversee the development of the electronic education record recommended in *Expecting More*. On July 27, the ECC established the Resource Partnership to do just that, and agreed on a set of strategies for moving forward. Since then, a handful of Partnership meetings have been held and a potential way to link educational information to an existing electronic system containing foster youth health data has been found, an information technology vendor selected,

projected software and server costs identified, and the process of determining the education data elements begun.

School-Based Support

- The ECC helped shape and support LAUSD's Access for All homeless resolution that provides additional staff and services for foster and homeless youth.
- LAUSD has appointed foster youth advocates at 300 of its schools.
- The Long Beach Unified School District has launched a school and community mentoring program that matches youth with administrators and counselors to motivate them to do better in school. It has also established a foster youth partnership with Long Beach City College.
- DCFS is working with LAUSD, Children Uniting Nations, and California State University Northridge to establish an academic mentoring program at Van Nuys High School. Five additional programs at middle schools are being planned for 2007.
- The Probation Department is building collaborations with school districts, the Sheriff's Department, and the county's Human Relations Commission to ensure safe passages to and from high-risk school sites and to establish a team of youth advocates who can intervene in potentially dangerous situations.
- LACOE and LAUSD have hosted meetings with the educational liaisons of over 20 school districts to share information and provide networking opportunities.

Accountability

- DCFS has increased training to caregivers and social workers on the importance of educational outcomes for foster youth and on raising academic expectations, and has formed a departmental team to ensure that case plans include education plans and that team decision-making conferences include educational efforts. It is also developing management reports that highlight the educational information recorded in its electronic case record system.
- School-based probation officers and multi-systemic and family therapy interventionists are now conducting case planning meetings that review short-term and long-term educational goals with parents/guardians and youth.
- DMH's school-based mental health services coordinators have conducted "case study" reviews for selected mental health providers and found that the interventions provided to these youth contributed to higher levels of academic achievement, special awards, increased attendance, more successful peer interaction, better socialization skills, and greater participation in student government, school-sponsored athletics, and social activities. In addition, higher numbers of youth enrolled in accelerated learning programs, graduated from high school, and are attending college. The department is also working to make educational achievement one of the mandatory recorded outcomes for Mental Health Services Act contracts.

- ACHSA and the Performance Measures Task Group supported DCFS's inclusion of a performance measure in group home and foster family agency contracts that tracks the number of children and youth whom agencies are able to enroll in school within three days.

Strengthening Relationships and Role Awareness

- The ECC convened a first-ever meeting between school superintendents, county departments, and the juvenile court to discuss how to make pertinent Blueprint recommendations a reality. Several agreements were reached, and the Antelope Valley and Pomona school districts invited DCFS to outstation social workers at their schools. A second meeting is scheduled for February 2007.
- The ECC is participating on the California Foster Youth Education Task Force and the California Collaborative for Children in Foster Care's design team. Both groups are attempting to accomplish at the state level much of what the ECC has laid out in *Expecting More*.



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February 7, 2007

TO: Sharon Watson
Education Coordinating Council

FROM: Jitahadi Imara, Acting Deputy Director
Probation Department

SUBJECT: **PROGRESS MADE BY THE PROBATION DEPARTMENT ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECC BLUEPRINT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Probation Department continues to be committed to the implementation of the ECC Blueprint, including its Seven Basic Agreements and twelve program and accountability recommendations for improving the educational achievement of our youth.

The following is provided as an additional update in our efforts to implement the ECC Blueprint (for inclusion in the Board letter due on February 15, 2007):

School Performance Measures

The Department's Juvenile Field Service Bureaus will be developing and aligning its school outcome measures with the standards set in the California State Board of Education Parent Education Guide. Implementation of these measures will ensure that parents and probationers have the requisite skills to perform at grade level. The Department will provide ECC with a progress report.

Probation to College Pilot

The Probation Department, Los Angeles City Youth Opportunity Movement (YOM), and Los Angeles Trade Technical College is piloting the Students for Higher Education Program and stands out as a stellar effort at collaboration, meaningful intervention, and mission driven dedication.

While the collaboration among City, County, and higher education institutions is in and of itself to be applauded, the program works with a troubled population that others avoid-highest risk youth, many of whom are already in gangs in all of whom are in a probation camp. As a pilot, the program currently operates at Camp Gonzalez with 50 youth who receive a mix of case management, mentoring, leadership development

access to college credit courses, vocational training, and intensive transition services. The stated goal is to reduce recidivism rates among these youth, but the program does much more. For many of these youth, the idea that they could even think about attending college, let alone secure up to seven (7) college credits while they are at camp was unimaginable. Some of the youth participate in the culinary training program learning real-life vocational skills that can help them to secure jobs when they exit from the camp. The most important component of this program, however, is that there is intensive transition support for youth by YOM and Probation case managers who regularly visit them at the camp and follow-up with them immediately after their release. After being released, YOM case managers take the youth to Los Angeles Trade Technical College to enroll them and provide financial support for basic necessities and school supplies. They continue to track the youth for the next 12 months by mentoring, giving support, and helping them solve problems.

The targeted services to high-risk youth, mixing of opportunities with support services, intensive transition support from the probation camp, and case management follow-up over a significant period of time are all part of a successful strategy that should be replicated elsewhere. The program is also a reminder to the City that while prevention is the best strategy for most youth, intervention strategies, even with those youth who are gang involved, are not only possible but already being implemented successfully.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (562) 940-2560 or contact Sharon Harada, Bureau Chief for Juvenile Field Services at (562) 940-2506.

Jl:sh

C: Sharon Harada




Los Angeles County
Education Coordinating Council

Raising Educational Achievement for Foster and Probation Youth

February 14, 2008

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Sharon G. Watson 
Lead Consultant, Education Coordinating Council

**PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN
“EXPECTING MORE; A BLUEPRINT FOR RAISING THE EDUCATIONAL
ACHIEVEMENT OF FOSTER AND PROBATION YOUTH”**

At its meeting on February 14, 2006, your Board approved “*Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth*,” developed by the Education Coordinating Council (ECC), and instructed the ECC to report its progress in implementing the recommendations in that document to your Board every six months. The first Progress Report was delivered to your Board on August 14, 2006, the second on February 14, 2007 and the third on August 14, 2007; this is now the fourth report.

The ECC and its members have made terrific strides in implementing the recommendations in *Expecting More* during the past six months and we thank your Board and the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation for the significant financial support that made a lot of this progress possible. Much is being accomplished in the quest to raise the academic performance of children and youth under the supervision of DCFS and Probation, especially in those areas requiring inter-departmental and/or inter-sector collaboration.

For example, the ECC is participating on the Comprehensive Education Reform Committee, created by the Chief Probation Officer in response to Supervisor Knabe’s June 19, 2007 motion. This Committee was charged by your Board with developing a comprehensive plan to “dramatically reform education programs in the County’s juvenile halls and probation camps, including the feasibility of charter schools and other innovative models of education.” In partnership with the Children’s Planning Council (CPC), the ECC convened a broad group of public and community stakeholders to provide input and advice to this Committee, including the Commission for Children and Family Services, Public Defender, New Visions Foundation, Advancement Project, Association of Community Human Service Agencies, Girls and Gangs, Helpline Youth

Counseling, and one of CPC's parent representatives. Chief Taylor presented a draft of the plan to the ECC at its meeting on January 31, 2008, which the ECC endorsed with a few amendments. It is anticipated that the final plan will be presented to your Board next month.

In addition, the ECC is participating on the planning committee for a Los Angeles version of the Children's Defense Fund's highly successful conference, "America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline Crisis," held in Washington, D.C. last fall. The Los Angeles conference is scheduled to be held on May 14, and will highlight the work being done within the county to prevent youth from becoming a part of this pipeline.

Some of the key achievements with respect to individual Blueprint recommendations are:

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Recommendation #1: Higher numbers of children in the care of DCFS, and the children of foster and probation youth, should be enrolled in high-quality early intervention, care, and education programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive.

- In October 2007, the ECC released "*Investing in the Future of L.A.'s Most At-Risk Children.*" This report recommended that the ECC convene key stakeholders to design an integrated, countywide initiative that links the early childhood education, child welfare and probation systems to ensure the healthy development of the county's young children. This stakeholder group will present an action plan for this initiative to the ECC at its April meeting.

A second report, "*Data on Needs and Resources for Preschool Children Involved with Child Welfare and Probation,*" was released at the same time, highlighting information that will be helpful to the design of the initiative. For example, over 20,000 children under the age of 6 came to the attention of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in 2006, with over half from 0 to 2 years old. Maps were created, in partnership with Healthy City, showing where DCFS children, ages 0-2 and 3-5, reside. Additional maps, showing the location of early care and education programs in these areas, are being developed so that young DCFS children can be quickly connected to high quality education resources.

- To help increase these connections, the ECC and DCFS, in collaboration with the Child Care Resource Center, USC Head Start and Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Head Start agencies, conducted an outreach effort to connect caregivers of young DCFS children with Head Start programs that had immediate openings. DCFS reports that approximately 10% of caregivers/foster parents who were sent notices followed up with contacts to Head Start agencies.
- In addition, DCFS convened a workgroup to identify and develop additional strategies to substantially increase the number of its children that are enrolled in a high quality early education or child care program. As a first step in this process,

the workgroup conducted a survey to determine how many DCFS children were already enrolled in these kinds of programs and, for those that were not, what the reasons were for not enrolling the child. The survey results/analysis will be available shortly.

- 145 applications to participate in the County's Steps to Excellence Quality Rating Program (STEP) have been received by the Office of Child Care, 70 from child care centers and 75 from family child care providers. 130 of these applicants also requested mini-grants, and 85 child care professionals have participated in STEP training activities since September 2007.
- The Los Angeles County Office of Child Care reports that a total of \$1.4 billion from various funding sources was spent on direct early care and education services in the county during the 2006-07 fiscal year.

Recommendation #2: Community organizations and county departments should offer increased support and resources to parents, relative caregivers, and foster parents to help them be good nurturers and provide the positive learning environments that will ensure that their children are ready for school.

- The Children's Planning Council launched its Abriendo Puertas (Opening Doors) project, which is providing parenting and leadership training for immigrant Latino parents with children ages 0 to 5. 81 participants attended the first set of training sessions, which are peer-led, with a planned expansion to begin this spring. The Public Library and other county partners are helping to make this project a success.
- Children's Bureau's Magnolia Place, a comprehensive, neighborhood-based, primary prevention program that builds supports for young children from the prenatal stage through age 5, opened last month. Magnolia Place houses several early childhood education programs, a Parent Leadership Council, mental health/substance abuse/domestic violence treatment services, adult education and employment support programs, a credit union and financial literacy services, a pediatric and women's health and dental clinic, legal aid and a county satellite office to connect families to essential services and resources. Families are a very important part of shaping the programs and services at Magnolia Place.
- The Tel Aviv/Los Angeles Partnership of the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles' Families At-Risk Project is working to promote the importance of early intervention, service integration and public/private partnerships for children and families, and to develop a shared community agenda that provides supports so that children can thrive within their own families. Two ECC members and the Council's early childhood education coordinator participated in the Los Angeles delegation's visit to Tel Aviv in October 2007 and in hosting Tel Aviv representatives in Los Angeles earlier this month.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation #3: Higher numbers of DCFS and Probation youth should be enrolled in skill-building and enrichment programs that include non-system students and provide opportunities for positive and enduring connections to nurturing adults.

- The ECC is convening a first-ever Resource Fair for approximately 500 DCFS and Probation youth, caregivers and those who work with these youth. This event will bring together countywide resources for vulnerable youth, ages 0 to 24, in the areas of early childhood education, after-school and summer programming, literacy, arts and culture, school transitions and college readiness. The California Endowment has graciously offered the use of its entire facility to stage this event on June 25, 2008. Over a dozen partners, including county departments, the City of Los Angeles, schools, and community-based and youth organizations are involved in planning this Fair.
- There has been a significant expansion of academic mentoring programs in the Los Angeles and Compton Unified School Districts. Five new Children Uniting Nations/MPLAY programs at LAUSD middle schools—Virgil, Gompers, Bethune, Drew and Markham—are scheduled to open this spring and will, collectively, serve 200 foster youth. The Children, Youth and Family Collaborative is now operating 20 academic mentoring programs in LAUSD and Compton USD elementary, middle and high schools, a 35% increase from 2006.
- Members of the Los Angeles Youth Transition Action Team worked to more than quadruple the number of foster and probation youth participants in the Summer Youth Employment Program, from 43 in 2006 to 174 in 2007.
- The Los Angeles City Workforce Investment Board is creating incentives for providers of its Hire LA and summer youth employment programs to give priority enrollment to foster and probation youth.

Recommendation #4: Youth should be systematically engaged and meaningfully involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating the programs, activities, and events in which they will participate.

- The City of Los Angeles Youth Council Coordinator is seeking to increase the participation of foster and probation youth on that Council. Information regarding a recent contest to design a Council logo, with a substantial prize for the winner, was distributed to DCFS and Probation youth in an attempt to peak their interest in the Council.
- The LAUSD/Casey Family Programs/RAND school intervention project that is targeting youth in foster care who have experienced trauma, included youth on its community advisory board.

- LACOE's "Transitions 411" conference, to be held in August 2008, will focus on self advocacy strategies for foster youth, including skill training and information to help them better represent their own interests with respect to education and transition issues. The California Youth Connection is a key partner and will help to identify the best methods to share information for participants.
- Department of Mental Health (DMH)-supported youth drop-in centers are involving youth in the design, implementation and evaluation of offered services. In some sites youth participate in the development of selected groups and co-facilitate many of them.

Recommendation #5: Families, caregivers, and agency staff should pay greater attention to preparing DCFS and Probation children and youth for transitions to preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school, adult education, vocational school, college, and employment, and for transfers between schools.

- In January 2008, First 5 LA re-authorized funds for its very successful School Readiness Initiative which, in partnership with First 5 California, funds 42 centers and programs throughout the county that provide a wide range of services to help children from birth to age 5 get ready for school.
- The Westside Infant-Family Network (WIN) provides infant mental health care and comprehensive support services through six West Los Angeles agencies, networking existing basic services (child care, homeless services, medical clinic, food pantry, etc.) with new mental health services through a shared team of bilingual therapists. Since its launch 18 months ago, WIN has served 361 individuals in 82 families.
- The Pomona Unified School District is partnering with the DCFS Pomona office and Casey Family Programs to improve educational continuity and school stability for children in out-of-home care. Pomona USD and DCFS are using ECC's just-completed Pomona USD data match information to identify shared students so that they can provide them with targeted services and supports.
- Mediated a legislative issue between California group homes and former foster youth (AB 497) to prevent group home youth from being required to attend Non-Public schools until a lengthy Individualized Education Plan (IEP) could be completed. The revised bill requires that the IEP process be expedited so that group home youth can be more quickly placed in the most appropriate educational setting.
- In the past six months, DCFS's new team of education consultants completed work on 778 referrals. 221 cases or 28.4% of these referrals involved enrollment issues, 192 cases or 24.7% were for academic issues (including poor grades) and 170 cases or 21.9% were for IEP issues. The next three highest requested areas of service involved education records, child behavior or special education issues.

- Middle school-based Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) are working with the department's high school-based DPOs to assist middle school probationers successfully transition to high school in Probation's Summer School Transition Project. In addition, Camp-To-Community Transition Program DPOs are working with parents and school officials to facilitate transitioning youth from probation camps to appropriate community schools. Approximately 75-80% are now being enrolled or have enrollment appointments within 48 hours of their release from camp.
- The California Community Colleges launched a Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI) which mandates that a FYSI liaison be on each community college campus in order to improve foster youth access to student services and resources, increase retention, and raise academic performance.
- LAUSD and the Children, Youth and Family Collaborative launched Boys Uplifted, an academic program for at-risk boys at three South Los Angeles schools that prepares participants for admission to four-year colleges and helps participating students secure scholarships.
- LACOE, through a Juvenile Detention Settings grant, is providing transition skill training to incarcerated youth at four probation camps (Afflerbaugh, Paige, Kirby and Miller) to help them make easier transitions from camp to the community and to school.
- The ECC is now overseeing the issuance of \$100,000 in college scholarship funds to 12 probation youth honored at the department's Success is Our Future event last May. These funds, provided by a private donor, will help meet the financial needs of these scholarship recipients throughout their undergraduate years.
- Worked with the Prosper Academy to finalize a conceptual framework for a residential academy for DCFS and probation students in Los Angeles County, based on the *LA Model for Residential Academies* developed by the ECC at the request of the Board of Supervisors in 2005. We are also helping them locate a suitable site for an academy. In addition, the ECC helped create the California Academies for Residential Care (CARE), a group of 5 counties (Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, Santa Barbara and Ventura) interested in implementing residential academies throughout the State.

Recommendation #6: The ECC should participate in and work to align local efforts to create safer schools (including passages to and from), particularly within and among the seven school districts represented on the ECC.

- Brokering a partnership between the MTA, a LAUSD charter school and two offices of the Board of Supervisors, to launch a pilot program whereby students will receive free Transit Access Passes to help them get to and from school. The program will then track student attendance increases that result from safe and reliable transportation.

- LAUSD, the Mayor of Los Angeles, and the Los Angeles Police Department are working together to target crime in 20 middle and high school gang reduction zones created in September 2007. Several of these schools—Dorsey, Jefferson, Jordan and Roosevelt high schools and Markham middle school—have high numbers of foster and probation youth.
- Probation has worked to develop School Safety Collaborative/Safe Passages programs for youth traveling to and from schools in high crime areas, especially at schools where the department has out-stationed DPOs. These safety collaborative groups have been successful in reducing violence and gang attacks, as well as increasing school attendance.
- DCFS provides a half-time social worker to the ABC Unified School District as part of its Federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students grant program. This partnership is proving to be successful in keeping families out of the child welfare system. A similar program is being planned for the Montebello Unified School District this spring.
- DMH Prenatal to Five (P25) program staff and school mental health coordinators in SPA 8 are serving as partners in the Lennox Safe Schools Alliance (LSSA). DMH is assisting with the preschool families' component of the LSSA by facilitating access to various training resources for staff and families regarding social-emotional development and mental health issues.
- The City of Commerce, in collaboration with the Montebello Unified School District and the Public Defender's Office, hosted a 3 Day Drug Store event to teach sixth-graders about the dangers of drug use. Participating schools included Bell Gardens, Macy and Suva Intermediate and Laguna Neuva and Rosewood Park Elementary.

DATA AND INFORMATION-SHARING

Recommendation #7: The enhanced sharing of information among school districts, county departments, the juvenile courts, and counsel for children who appear in those courts should be assured by concurrently working to:

Resolve differing views about what federal law and California law allow, especially regarding federal confidentiality regulations, so that placing agencies (such as DCFS and Probation) and counsel for the child can access school records without a court order or authorization from a parent/guardian/holder of education rights, thereby enabling them to carry out their responsibility to meet the educational needs of children in their care

Establish a clear and consistent understanding of federal and state confidentiality laws among school districts, DCFS, Probation, and children's counsel so that infor-

mation necessary for school success is routinely shared in a timely and effective manner

Pursue amendments to the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), if needed, to clarify that child welfare agencies and legal representatives are able to independently access, share, and receive educational information with and from all school districts

Advocate for school districts in Los Angeles County to include child welfare personnel among those designated as eligible to receive ‘directory information’ on enrolled students. (School districts currently include juvenile justice personnel, but those provisions have not been interpreted in Los Angeles County as including DCFS employees.)

Draft a court order that would permit county departments and the youth’s attorneys, while a youth is under the Juvenile Court’s jurisdiction, to access pupil records, grades, transcripts, special education assessments, individual education plans, and current attendance records

With foster and probation youth, develop guidelines for information-sharing that do not violate their need for privacy and confidentiality

- The process for DCFS, Probation, children’s attorneys and CASAs (Court-Appointed Special Advocates) to obtain complete educational records from school districts is now in place. Attorneys from the Children’s Law Center’s three law firms and CASA of Los Angeles volunteers have been trained on the use of the Student Records Request Form (SRRF) developed by the ECC in 2007 following the blanket order issued by the Juvenile Court. The Probation Department has issued a directive to Deputy Probation Officers to begin using this form and DCFS has revised its education record request form to incorporate language from the SRRF.
- Brokered an agreement between DCFS and LAUSD whereby DCFS will send LAUSD, three times per year, the names of all department youth. LAUSD will then identify who are district students so that they can be connected to specialized services.

Recommendation #8: The ECC should work with the Chief Administrative Office, county departments, school districts, and placement provider agencies to ensure the development of an electronically based information system that includes the individual educational records of DCFS and probation youth.

- The CEO is moving forward with a plan to expand the mHUB database system, pioneered by the Violence Intervention Project at its DCFS medical hub, to all DCFS medical hubs countywide. This will enable critical health and mental health information of department youth to be shared across hubs as youth move to

different communities. The ECC is pursuing adding student educational information to this countywide system.

- Continuing to work with the Commission for Children and Families, Children's Action Network, Casey Family Programs, the Data Quality Campaign and the California Education Collaborative for Children in Foster Care on securing permission from the U.S. Department of Health and Human services to create an electronic-based educational record system for DCFS and probation students.

SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT

Recommendation #9: Educational liaisons and school-based staff should be provided with the information they are requesting about who these youth are, the names of those responsible for their education (holders of educational rights, caregivers, caseworkers, attorneys, etc.), how best to contact them, and what services and supports are available for these youth.

- Completed data matches with the Pomona and Montebello Unified School Districts, DCFS and Probation to determine the names of shared youth, which schools they attend, and how they are faring academically compared to other district students. Additional data matches are now underway with the Los Angeles, Long Beach, Norwalk/La Mirada and Lancaster school districts.
- DCFS created a one-page information sheet, at the request of school superintendents, outlining department contact information (who to contact and how to contact them) for school district personnel seeking information about DCFS youth. This document is solving a big dilemma for school staff who, unfamiliar with DCFS's structure, had resorted to calling the DCFS hotline whenever they had a question about a youth. This information sheet was distributed at the ECC's School Superintendents meeting in November 2007 and to all school-based education liaisons.

Recommendation #10: School-based staff should be trained regarding the educational and emotional needs of foster and probation youth and ways to meet those needs.

- LAUSD Local District 3 created a Resource Coordinating Council to develop programs that will promote student learning and coordinate educational and support resources at schools and in the community. This Council is training school staff about the needs of foster and probation youth and has linked local resources, such as those offered by the Department of Mental Health, to these programs.
- As a result of a recent LAUSD program re-design, that district's Foster Care Unit is now supervising 70 tutors who are providing assistance to youth in residential

treatment facilities. This Unit, with the capacity to expand to 110, will now be able to make resources for foster and probation youth available to many more youth in care.

- Pomona Unified School District held customer service staff development trainings in November 2007 and January 2008, which included presentations from both DCFS and Probation staff on issues relating to system youth.
- The Probation Department now requires juvenile field DPOs to take a series of state-certified training courses in Adolescent Development and Trauma, Loss and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among Incarcerated Youth.
- DCFS has developed a training module for all new social workers that highlights the importance of education to children's well-being and includes basic educational concepts and requirements for the children they serve. New social workers must now complete this training before beginning casework activities. In the summer of 2008, training sessions will also be conducted with DCFS social workers and line managers that address the importance of school-related database information, quality pre-school and child care, accessing mentoring and tutoring programs in communities, IEPs, and education rights holder issues. In addition, staff will be presented with a framework and tools for helping families navigate the education system to improve academic outcomes for their children.
- The Department of Mental Health, in collaboration with LACOE and LAUSD, co-sponsored a "Focus on Prevention" forum in November 2007. 200 school district representatives participated and were educated about the Mental Health Services Prevention and Early Intervention Plan, best and promising practices with respect to priority populations, including trauma-exposed children, children in stressed families, children/youth at risk of school failure and juvenile justice involvement, current gaps in needed services and prospective funding opportunities.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Recommendation #11: County departments, school districts, and the judiciary should cross-train key stakeholder groups on their collective and individual responsibilities for ensuring that foster and probation youth receive a solid education.

- LACOE and LAUSD convened the education liaisons from 18 school districts and county departments in October 2007 for a day-long training on the unique needs of foster and probation youth. Schools requested additional information on how to navigate county systems. As a first step in this process, LAUSD, LACOE, CASA of Los Angeles and the juvenile court are organizing a tour of the court for school liaisons and other school personnel this spring, so that they can learn more about how the court operates.

- LAUSD continues to convene bi-monthly Community Partners meetings, which include city and county departments, to collaborate on program design and share resources. That district is planning to conduct additional cross-training sessions with DCFS and Probation school-based staff and LAUSD school principals, deans and office staff on the educational and emotional needs of system youth.
- The Probation Department has conducted several training sessions with juvenile court bench officers on its Title IV-E Waiver implementation plan and on its camp re-design both of which address the educational achievement of probation youth.

Recommendation #12: DCFS/Probation caseworkers, caregivers, and the courts should each be accountable for the educational success of foster and probation youth through a three-pronged approach:

DCFS and Probation caseworkers shall ensure, using multidisciplinary team decision-making and case conferences, that academic expectations are established for these youth and that educational plans are developed which outline the activities youth should participate in to meet those expectations. These team meetings should include, at a minimum, youth, parents, caregivers, and school representatives.

Caregivers and others identified in the plan shall implement these educational plans by facilitating the child's involvement in the agreed-upon programs and activities.

Courts shall monitor the creation of these plans and the progress made in achieving them, and hold the involved parties accountable for their implementation.

- All judicial officers are using the education information form in the education case plan developed by the ECC; they are now regularly asking questions about the education of the children and youth they are responsible for and requesting education reports from the field. The court is also working with the Probation Department to train staff on the use of the education case plan.
- The ECC worked with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and DCFS to incorporate educational questions into Team Decision Making (TDM) meetings. Met with over 50 TDM facilitators in December 2007 to determine how education planning could be included in these meetings and all facilitators were trained on the agreed-upon protocol in January 2008.
- The Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA) reported that, as a result of the AB 490 letter signed by the superintendents of ECC member school districts and other interested districts, 87% of the youth in the care of its agencies are now enrolled in school within 3 days. As ACHSA agencies serve 30% of the overall foster youth population in the county, this is a very significant improvement.

In summary, ECC members, partners and community organizations are successfully making *Expecting More* a reality and the Council looks forward to reporting further progress in its next report in August 2008. If you should have any questions or require any additional information, your staff may contact the ECC at: (213) 974-5967.

cc: Chief Executive Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Director, Children and Family Services
Chief Probation Officer
Director, Mental Health
Superintendent, Office of Education
Education Coordinating Council




DAVID SANDERS, PH.D.
Director

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020
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Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District
YVONNE B. BURKE
Second District
ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District
DON KNABE
Fourth District
MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

April 4, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Gloria Molina

From: David Sanders, Ph.D. 
Director

**FEBRUARY 14, 2006 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #S-1 RE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
EDUCATION COORDINATING COUNCIL'S BLUEPRINT**

On February 14, 2006, your Board took the following actions:

1. Adopted the Education Coordinating Council's (ECC) Blueprint, including its Seven Basic Agreements for those responsible for the educational success of foster and probation youth, and the twelve program and accountability recommendations for improving the educational achievement of these youth;
2. Directed the ECC, in collaboration with the Superintendent of Schools, to convene a meeting of all school district Superintendents in the County in order to provide a briefing of the Blueprint and create strategies for implementing the recommendations pertinent to the school districts;
3. Directed the ECC to report back to the Board every six months on the progress made in implementing the recommendations identified in the Blueprint;
4. Directed the Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to report to the Board on how they can respond to Recommendation No. 2, page 11, of the attached report, as it relates to caregivers; and
5. Directed the following departments take the actions as detailed below and report back to the Board by April 4, 2006:

- Directed the Director of Children and Family Services, Chief Probation Officer, Director of Mental Health, and the Superintendent of Schools, to report with a specific plan to implement the ECC Blueprint;
- Directed the Director of Children and Family Services to report on whether they have begun requesting individual orders in each child's Juvenile Dependency case enabling the Department of Children and Family Services to obtain educational information from the school districts, and if not, why not;
- Directed the Chief Administrative Officer, County Counsel, Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to draft a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on a proposed legislative amendment to improve social workers' access to educational information under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act; and
- Directed the Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to report back to the Board of Supervisors with a proposal to make the ECC's proposed Educational Case Plan process meaningful, detailing how the departments will ensure that each child's plan is implemented.

The ECC's Blueprint is a very effective guide to focus the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders, especially DCFS, Probation, the Department of Mental Health and the Los Angeles County Office of Education. The Blueprint helps our Departments lay the foundation to greatly improve the educational achievement for the youth in our systems. Establishing high academic expectations with shared responsibility and accountability for all of our stakeholders and youth will help to overcome the historic challenges in raising the educational achievement for foster and probation youth.

Attached are the Seven Basic Agreements (Attachment A), the Recommendations (Attachment B) and each agency's stand-alone response report to your Board's directives.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Manager, Board Relations Section at (213) 351-5530.

DS:LP:PM:pm

Attachments

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Auditor-Controller

Seven Basic Agreements

Those responsible for the educational attainment of foster and probation youth must agree to at least seven things if we are to achieve the results we want.

1. Everyone must understand the *central importance of education* for the current well-being and future prospects of children and youth, expressing that value clearly and consistently in every aspect of their work.

"If we can master the system, we can master college."

—Berisha Black, Los Angeles County Emancipation Ombudsman and former foster youth

2. Everyone needs to adopt and maintain *high expectations for the children and youth* involved in these systems, believing in their ability to succeed educationally and demanding improvements in school attendance and achievement.

3. A *strong investment in prevention*, assuring that children are enrolled in high-quality early care and education programs, is fundamental. Current research demonstrating the power of high-quality child care, preschool, family support, and family literacy programs in preventing maltreatment—and the long-term benefits of such services—makes it vital for us to assure that vulnerable children have priority access to such programs.
4. Everyone must *pay attention to and address early on any factor affecting educational success*, including the social, developmental, health, mental health, and learning challenges of youth.
5. *School stability* must be strongly considered when making residential and educational placement decisions, except when a school does not adequately meet the needs of the child or youth. School stability, in the right school for that youth, is the basis for building positive attachments and educational continuity, and is essential to raising academic achievement. When a change in schools is unavoidable, or is found to be in the child's best interest, records should be transferred quickly and youth enrolled immediately in the new school.
6. *Parents and caregivers should be involved* in all aspects of their children's education.
7. A *shared understanding of educational responsibility* must be achieved among all partners and groups who help to care for these youth, so that roles and responsibilities can be clarified and each group held accountable.

**ECC Recommendations from
Expecting More
A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of
Foster and Probation Youth**

1. Higher numbers of children in the care of DCFS, and the children of foster and probation youth, should be enrolled in high-quality early intervention, care, and education programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive.
2. Community organizations and county departments should offer increased support and resources to parents, relative caregivers, and foster parents to help them be good nurturers and provide the positive learning environments that will ensure that their children are ready for school.
3. Higher numbers of DCFS and Probation youth should be enrolled in skill-building and enrichment programs that include non-system students and provide opportunities for positive and enduring connections to nurturing adults.
4. Youth should be systematically engaged and meaningfully involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating the programs, activities, and events in which they will participate.
5. Families, caregivers, and agency staff should pay greater attention to preparing DCFS and Probation children and youth for transitions to preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school, adult education, vocational school, college, and employment, and for transfers between schools.
6. The ECC should participate in and work to align local efforts to create safer schools (including passages to and from), particularly within and among the seven school districts represented on the ECC—the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the Lancaster School District, the Pasadena Unified School District, the Compton Unified School District, the Long Beach Unified School District, the Pomona Unified School District, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE).
7. The enhanced sharing of information among school districts, county departments, the juvenile courts, and counsel for children who appear in those courts should be assured by concurrently working to:
 - Resolve differing views about what federal law and California law allow, especially regarding federal confidentiality regulations, so that placing agencies (such as DCFS and Probation) and counsel for the child can access school records without a court order or authorization from a

parent/guardian/holder of education rights, thereby enabling them to carry out their responsibility to meet the educational needs of children in their care.

- Establish a clear and consistent understanding of federal and state confidentiality laws among school districts, DCFS, Probation, and children's counsel so that information necessary for school success is routinely shared in a timely and effective manner.
 - Pursue amendments to the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), if needed, to clarify that child welfare agencies and legal representatives are able to independently access, share, and receive educational information with and from all school districts.
 - Advocate for school districts in Los Angeles County to include child welfare personnel among those designated as eligible to receive 'directory information' on enrolled students. (School districts currently include juvenile justice personnel, but those provisions have not been interpreted in Los Angeles County as including DCFS employees.) *'Directory information' includes the pupil's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height (for members of athletic teams), dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous public or private school attended by the pupil. Parents have the right to opt out of sharing this information with any entity on the school district's eligibility list.*
 - Draft a court order that would permit county departments and the youth's attorneys, while a youth is under the Juvenile Court's jurisdiction, to access pupil records, grades, transcripts, special education assessments, individual education plans, and current attendance records.
 - With foster and probation youth, develop guidelines for information-sharing that do not violate their need for privacy and confidentiality.
8. The ECC should work with the Chief Administrative Office, other county departments, school districts, and placement provider agencies to ensure the development of an electronically based information system that includes the individual educational records of DCFS and probation youth.
9. Educational liaisons and school-based staff should be provided with the information they are requesting about who these youth are, the names of those responsible for their education (holders of educational rights, caregivers, caseworkers, attorneys, etc.), how best to contact them, and what services and supports are available for these youth.

10. School-based staff should be trained regarding the educational and emotional needs of foster and probation youth and ways to meet those needs.
11. County departments, school districts, and the judiciary should cross-train the stakeholder groups listed above on their collective and individual responsibilities for ensuring that foster and probation youth receive a solid education.
12. DCFS/Probation caseworkers, caregivers, and the courts should each be accountable for the educational success of foster and probation youth through a three-pronged approach:
 - DCFS and Probation caseworkers shall ensure, by using multidisciplinary team decision-making and case conferences, that academic expectations are established for these youth and that educational plans are developed which outline the activities youth should participate in to meet those expectations. These team meetings should include, at a minimum, youth, parents, caregivers, and school representatives.
 - Caregivers and others identified in the plan shall implement these educational plans by facilitating the child's involvement in the agreed-upon programs and activities.
 - Courts shall monitor the creation of these plans and the progress made in achieving them, and hold the involved parties accountable for their implementation.

Attachment I

Department of Children and Family Services
Report



DAVID SANDERS, PH.D.
Director

County of Los Angeles
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425 Shatto Place -- Los Angeles, California 90020
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Board of Supervisors

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First District

YVONNE B. BURKE
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ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

April 4, 2006

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Gloria Molina

From: David Sanders, Ph.D.
Director

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "DS" or similar initials, is placed next to the name "David Sanders, Ph.D." in the "From:" line.

**FEBRUARY 14, 2006 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #S-1 RE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
EDUCATION COORDINATING COUNCIL'S BLUEPRINT**

On February 14, 2006, your Board adopted the Education Coordinating Council's (ECC) Blueprint, including its Seven Basic Agreements for those responsible for the educational success of foster and probation youth, and the twelve program and accountability recommendations for improving the educational achievement of these youth. At the same time, Supervisor Knabe requested a report on how the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department can respond to Recommendation 2, of the ECC Blueprint, as it relates to caregivers. Your Board then directed the following:

1. The Director of Children and Family Services, Chief Probation Officer, Director of Mental Health, and the Superintendent of Schools, to report with a specific plan to implement the ECC Blueprint.
2. The Director of the Children and Family Services to report on whether they have begun requesting individual orders in each child's Juvenile Dependency case enabling the Department of Children and Family Services to obtain educational information from the school districts, and if not, why not.
3. The Chief Administrative Officer, County Counsel, Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to draft a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on a proposed legislative amendment to improve social workers' access to educational information under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

4. **The Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to report back to the Board of Supervisors with a proposal to make the ECC's proposed Educational Case Plan process meaningful, detailing how the departments will ensure that each child's plan is implemented.**

The Department's plan to implement the ECC's Education Blueprint to improve the educational achievement of the children and youth we serve will address the Seven Basic Agreements and each of the twelve recommendations taken directly from the report, "Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth."

The Education Unit will oversee the implementation plan and will be supported by the Regional and Program Education Liaisons as well as the Educational Specialists, who we plan to house in each of our regional offices. The Educational Specialists will serve as educational consultants to our Children's Social Workers (CSW) and caregivers. They will help navigate the school systems and address the more challenging educational issues faced by our youth. Our goal is to provide one full time equivalent person for each of the nineteen regional offices.

Efforts will be made to develop a system where the Department can ensure the name of each child's school and educational status and progress will be input into his or her CWS/CMS record. If this can be accomplished, eligibility and accessibility to available resources will be enhanced, and service provision documented in a more thorough and accurate reporting to the courts.

Department policy and procedures exist for many of the suggested recommendations found in the ECC Blueprint. A review of the current work structure will be conducted to address feasible options to facilitate full compliance with these important policies and procedures.

The Seven Basic Agreements

The Department endorses the tenets delineated in the Seven Basic Agreements. The children and families we serve will benefit from articulating these shared values, which integrate the central importance of education in their current and future lives. The Department is committed to incorporate the Seven Basic Agreements into the agency's culture and work practices. The Department will disseminate these principles to our stakeholders and community partners to emphasize the shared responsibility each holds to improve educational outcomes. We will have the document translated into Spanish, as well as simplifying the language and creating a brochure for the youth and caregivers. We will have posters displayed and the brochures available in each of our regional offices.

We will integrate the Seven Basic Agreements, along with a discussion of the Department's commitment and the Children's Social Worker's (CSW) obligation to address children's academic progress and educational needs in their daily work, into

the core training CSWs receive upon entering the Department. Similar training will be conducted for newly entering foster and resource families.

Recommendation 1

The Department is committed to increasing the enrollment of young children into high-quality early intervention programs, such as Early Head Start, Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) and Head Start, by:

- Using the Medical Hub Program to address the issues of early intervention and high quality care for children detained in foster care. Caregivers receive information via the Hub Caregiver Letter, the Hub Caregiver Notice and the Informational/Town Hall meetings. The Developmental Specialist at the Medical Hub Program will conduct an initial screening and refer to a Regional Center when necessary.
- Creating a component in the Model Approach to Partnerships and Parenting (MAPP) training that includes the benefits to the child and specifics of how and where to enroll DCFS children into these programs. Providing a program list according to SPA/geographical service areas, which includes the various program names, addresses, phone numbers, registration requirements, program descriptions, and hours of operation.
- Creating a component in the Kinship Education, Preparation and Support (KEPS) training that includes the benefits to the child and specifics of how and where to enroll DCFS children into these programs. Providing a program list according to SPA/geographical service areas, which includes the various program names, addresses, phone numbers, registration requirements, program descriptions, and hours of operation.
- Providing the Kinship Resource Centers with applications for the pre-school programs.
- Having quality preschool providers promote their programs and encourage registrations at the foster parent and kinship trainings and conferences, such as the annual Mi Casa Su Casa Conference.
- Conducting mailings of program listings by SPAs to foster and relative caregivers of pre-school aged children.
- Including provider lists in the placement packets of the children under 5 years of age.
- Encouraging providers to share their program information with the Regional Community Advisory Councils, Foster Family Agencies (FFA), foster parent associations and Adoption Promotion and Support Services programs.
- Discussing the benefits of high quality pre-school and encouragement to enroll, when appropriate, in the Team Decision-Making (TDM) Conferences or at the Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) meeting which occurs 30 to 45 days after detention.
- Inviting providers will be invited to provide in-service trainings at the Regional Offices' General Staff Meetings.

- Providing the addresses and phone numbers of early care and education resources by SPA, in the referral letters to DCFS families qualified to receive 18 months of subsidized childcare. This will be done to ensure greater participation into these programs.

Recommendation 2

The Department will offer increased support and resources to parents, relative caregivers and foster parents by doing the following:

- In addition to encouraging enrollment into quality pre-schools, in-service training and conference formats referenced above, the Department will continue to hold local networking conferences, including local education providers /representatives at the SPA/Office level. Local SPAs offices now have access to AB 2129 funds to support such activities and some offices have done this with great success. Such networking events facilitate development of relationships with school and district personnel at the local level where educational progress is most effectively monitored. Such events would focus on creating shared understanding at the local level of the following:
 - i. Educational Advocacy Role- training in AB 490, and grade performance expectations, and resources to assist the care provider with skill development ; and,
 - ii. Available resources in the local school and community (after school programs, tutors, educational scholarships and internship opportunities).
- DCFS will discuss the Department's commitment to education and provide the "Seven Basic Agreements and What They Mean" brochures at all Foster Care and Adoption orientations and caregiver conferences and trainings.
- The Kinship Resource Centers are available to receive and disseminate community educational resources to support the needs of the relative caregivers.
- DCFS will collaborate with community partners (FFAs, group homes, and residential facilities) to develop methods to improve learning environments for children.
- We will clearly define in writing what a "positive learning environment" is and what it looks like. This needs to be defined to CSWs, relative care providers, foster parents and FFAs so that everyone is consistent.
- Train potential foster care and kinship caregivers on providing a "positive learning environment" during their MAP and KEPS Training.
- The importance of trying to keep the child in their school of origin and helping the child focus on their school responsibilities, can be discussed in the Team

Decision-Making (TDM) Conferences or the Multidisciplinary Assessment Team (MAT) meeting, when appropriate.

- The MAT process could be utilized to help identify educational issues up front, when children are removed from their homes, and in giving caregivers information to assist in preparing children for educational progress.
- CSWs need to inquire with their families what resources are being utilized and actively encourage families to avail themselves to those resources.
- Kinship Resource Centers can be instrumental in supporting relatives and Post Adoption Services should be equipped to support and encourage adoptive parents.
- Collaborate with the Association of Community Human Services Agencies (ACHSA) on how to make education a priority in each child's life and how to create the best learning environments in their FFA's and group homes.

Recommendation 3

Children and youth will be encouraged to participate in after-school, off-track and summer academic and enrichment activities by their CSWs and caregivers. Program providers will be invited to the regional offices' general staff meetings and caregiver conferences to promote their tutoring, arts and culture, recreation, sports and athletics, community service and civic engagement, leadership development, internships and work experience, and life skills development opportunities.

Probation and DCFS are working on establishing a mentoring database for all existing matches, and tracking newly trained mentors through the matching process. We are working with the Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) Associates and collaborative partners on an Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency grant to fund a position for Foster Youth Initiative. We are also working with Children Uniting Nations, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the University of Southern California and California State University at Northridge to support academic mentoring programs at Foshay Middle School and Van Nuys High School. Both of these programs will support system as well as non-system youth determined to be at high risk. DCFS has set a goal of 400 new mentor-mentee matches by the end of 2006.

Recommendation 4

Youth involved with the California Youth Connection, the Transition Resource Centers, the various programs provided by The Community College Foundation, and the Transitional Housing Placement Program, to name a few, are available and willing to share their experiences to strengthen existing programs and develop new ones.

Recommendation 5

The schools and providers may be best set-up to organize a "Transition Assembly Day" for each transitioning level which could include discussion on what to expect, and how to navigate the new system, field trips and orientations to the transitioning school sites, college campuses, vocational schools, etc.

When no formal programs are available, the families and caregivers should be encouraged to talk about the upcoming changes and what can be expected, learning and soothing the child's concerns, bringing the child to the new school for a visit to become familiar with the surroundings, etc.

The Department has developed systems to insure that a higher percentage of eligible youth have a well-developed Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP). The Training Section, with support from Emancipation Services and Juvenile Dependency Court, has revised the TILP curriculum for a new round of training scheduled for roll out to the DCFS offices in the near future. Workshops on TILP planning and available resources for emancipating youth are also scheduled for upcoming countywide conferences for caregivers (Mi Casa, Su Casa). Caregivers and CSWs can discuss with the child, their future goals on a regular basis so that when the youth is eligible for TILP services they are prepared to participate. The child's school performance should be tied into these discussions in order to put into context why achieving in school is important to their future plans.

Recommendation 6

The Department is committed to the safety of the children we serve and will continue to work with the ECC and represented school districts to achieve safer campuses, as well as safer passage to and from schools.

Recommendation 7

The Department addresses the concerns related to information sharing below in directives two and three, Individual Court Orders and Proposed Legislative Amendment, on page 8.

Recommendation 8

The Department is committed to participate in the development of a secured electronically based information system that includes the individual educational records of the youth we serve.

Recommendation 9

In November 2005, the Department in partnership with Dependency Court established a procedure to notify the school district's educational liaisons and school-based staff when the holder of the education rights for the child has been changed. Further, policy is in place and forms exist notifying the school of the student's foster care status,

providing the CSW's and caregiver's names and contacts, and briefly identifying the child's educational needs. Better efforts will be made to enhance policy compliance.

Recommendation 10

Efforts to develop a better understanding of the educational and emotional needs of the youth we serve for school-based staff may best be accomplished through local networking conferences. Training and developing relationships with the local education providers and representatives at the SPA and regional office level will most effectively build a bridge of collaboration and a shared understanding between the two systems. Courses are available to increase the sensitivity of school personnel to the needs of children in the foster care system. AB 2129 funds could be utilized to support these efforts. Again, the key is the development of relationships at the local level where educational progress is most effectively monitored and achieved.

Recommendation 11

The Department's commitments delineated above addresses the cross training of the stakeholders and their collective and individual responsibilities for ensuring that the educational outcomes improve for the children and youth we serve.

The development and maintenance of key collaborative relationships to support the educational progress for foster children best occurs at the local level. In addition to suggestions noted under Recommendation 2, the Training Section currently has an E-Learning module on AB 490 (Educational Rights for Foster Children) for internal use by DCFS staff that can and will be adapted for posting on the Internet, allowing providers, school personnel and resource family members to access interactive training and information in electronic form on the internet. Such training, once adapted, will be posted via the DCFS Web-site.

Recommendation 12

As mentioned in the introduction and throughout this implementation plan, the Department is committed to utilizing multidisciplinary team decision-making processes in establishing the academic expectations and educational plans, which will direct the actions of the participants in the plan to achieve success.

At the individual child/family level, educational assessment and progress should be key points of discussion and planning in any and all team based formats for case decision-making including Team Decision Making (TDM.) Additionally, since placement out of area most frequently leads to a disruption in school and community ties, TDM's at initial placement should maximize attention to placement in the same school area and maintenance of key educational/social relationships.

Individual Court Orders

Currently the Department is utilizing a parental consent form to obtain the records. Under the Education Code, child welfare agencies may access a pupil's education records with the parent's consent or for the purposes of providing educational summaries for the Juvenile Court. Foster family agencies are also entitled to records of grades, transcripts, and any individualized education plans. If we are not able to obtain parental consent, we will request an individual court order and work with County Counsel, the school districts, and the Juvenile Court to obtain the necessary records in a timely and cost efficient manner. That order has been prepared and we have requested that County Counsel begin seeking Court orders when parental consent has not been obtained.

Further, the Juvenile Court has drafted a blanket order that could improve the Department's ability to access school records. At this point the Court is waiting to hear comments back about the proposed blanket order.

Proposed Legislative Amendment

The federal legislative agenda has been revised to include language to support proposals that would provide child welfare agencies, juvenile courts, and court-appointed advocates with access to educational records on children who they are serving. The following language is the proposed legislative amendment:

FERPA: Proposed 20 USC 1232g (b) (1) (K): State or local agency child protective services worker who is providing case management services for the child for the purposes of (1) ensuring that appropriate services are being provided to the child; and (2) promoting family reunification and permanency by reporting educational issues to the court. Any further dissemination of this information shall be in accordance with existing law, parent/guardian consent, or a valid court order.

Educational Case Plan

A review of current policy shows that all of the elements recommended in the ECC sample educational case plan are currently incorporated in a variety of case documents that must be updated regularly, such as court reports, the Health and Education Passport, and TILPs. The Department has established a work group consisting of regional offices, the Education, Policy, Information Services, and Court units to develop a quality improvement plan to streamline and reduce redundancy in the documentation of key educational elements and enhance the detailed reporting in CWS/CMS, court reports, and TILPs. The goal is to use the current information systems available to gather and document all the relevant educational plan information in records, and to be accountable for comprehensive plans.

The Education Unit will develop age-appropriate standards for pre-schoolers, school-age children and high school students, to clarify the Department's academic and

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enrichment expectations. This will help identify for CSWs what must be documented in the educational records and addressed at case conferences.

The Department is committed to the ECC's Blueprint and our implementation plan to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to establish academic expectations and educational plans for the children and youth that we serve. Together we will raise their educational achievement to enhance their future prospects in life.

If you have any questions, please call me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Manager, Board Relations Section at (213) 351-5530.

DS:LP:PM:pm

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Auditor-Controller

Attachment II

Probation Department
Report



PAUL HIGA
Chief Probation Officer

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PROBATION DEPARTMENT

9150 EAST IMPERIAL HIGHWAY — DOWNEY, CALIFORNIA 90242
(562) 940-2501



April 4, 2006

To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Gloria Molina

From: Robert B. Taylor *Bob Taylor*
Acting Chief Probation Officer

FEBRUARY 14, 2006 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #S-1 RE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION COORDINATING COUNCIL'S BLUEPRINT

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- **The Director of Children and Family Services, Chief Probation Officer, Director of Mental Health, and the Superintendent of Schools, to report with a specific plan to implement the ECC Blueprint.**
- **Direct the Chief Administrative Officer, County Counsel, Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to draft a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on a proposed legislative amendment to improve social workers' access to educational information under the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act.**
- **Direct the Director of Children and Family Services and Chief Probation Officer to report back to the Board of Supervisors with a proposal to make the ECC's proposed Educational Case Plan process meaningful, detailing how the departments will ensure that each child's plan is implemented.**

The Department's plan to implement the ECC's Education Blueprint will include its Seven Basic Agreements and twelve program and accountability recommendations for improving the educational achievement of our youth. Implementation will be advanced across our Department's Juvenile Bureaus (Juvenile Field, Residential Treatment Services and Detention Services) through Adult Field Services and in identified areas, in collaboration with DCFS as follows:

ECC - Seven Basic Agreements

The Department fully supports the ECC Blueprint's Seven Basic Agreements as foundational in order to achieve the results we are seeking for the educational success of our youth. The Department will incorporate the Seven Basic Agreements as a part of the development of our juvenile case planning process. The Department recently began the process to develop and implement a case plan that is predicated on our validated assessment (Los Angeles Risk and Resiliency Checkup). The Seven Basic Agreements and the proposed ECC Educational Case Plan will be enfolded into this in order to ensure a continuum of planning and care for each youth under our supervision.

Recommendation 1

The Department will continue efforts to promote and encourage the enrollment of the children of our probationers into high quality early intervention, care and education programs such as State Preschool, Early Head Start, Head Start and the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) program. The Los Angeles County Policy Roundtable for Child Care, in partnership with ECC, launched an outreach campaign to promote high quality preschool programs. In September 2005, Probation provided our Field staff with information on how probationers could enroll their children in State Preschool, Early Head Start, Head Start or the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) program. Our Probation liaison (staff) continues to participate in the pilot that matches children to these programs.

Additionally, the first meeting of the County New Directions Task Force formed a Pregnant and Parenting County Taskforce held on February 22, 2006, brought together the Department of Social Services (DPSS), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), DCFS and Probation in order to identify and meet the challenges of pregnant and parenting teens in Los Angeles County. In order to further engage parenting probationers to fill available openings in Head Start and preschool programs, Probation convened a meeting with the Department's dedicated Pregnant and Parenting Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs) and St. Anne's and Florence Crittenton Group Home on-site placement DPOs in order to facilitate early enrollment of the children of our probationers.

Probation will also continue to collaborate with the ECC, DCFS and the Los Angeles County Office of Child Care to connect probation families to subsidized childcare.

Probation currently participates by directly entering names of youth requiring services into the Centralized Eligibility List (CEL).

Recommendation 2

Probation has undertaken the following efforts to help ensure that parents, relative caregivers and foster parents are supported and provided resources to become good nurturers and ensure their children are ready for school:

- Encourage enrollment into quality childcare and preschool programming (see Recommendation 1).
- Recommend in our court reports that parents attend parenting classes that provide an arena for skill building and also support by other parents.
- Provide a basic parental education guide to parents of our youth transiting from probation camps that suggests proactive ways that parents can be involved in their child's educational process.
- Build parental skills and increase the ability of our camp aftercare parents to work with schools regarding the educational needs of their children (through contact with the parent prior to the youth's release from Camp into the community and assisting with the school enrollment process).
- Implement parent empowerment meetings at several high risk Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) School-Based Supervision Program sites designed to engage, empower and encourage parents to become more involved in the academic process (including homework, attendance and academic monitoring), while providing them with proven research-based strategies and interventions that underscore the importance of setting clear, positive standards that provide youth opportunities to contribute to their families and communities and recognizing them for their contributions. In collaboration with school administrators and community-based organizations, families are also introduced to programs (YMCA, faith-based, parks and recreation, etc) that give them an opportunity to spend meaningful time together. Additional parent empowerment meetings will be implemented in the up-coming months.
- Collaborate with the Community College Kinship Education Preparation and Support Program (KEPS) in order to assist Probation with engaging and supporting relative caregivers in our youth's educational development.
- Implement initiatives to accomplish your Board's Motion that, "*Probation, Public Library and LACOE will develop a plan to provide each student [in Probation camps and halls] with a library card.*" The Department plans to expand this initiative by working with Residential Treatment Services, Detention Services and Field staff, in conjunction with other agency staff (e.g. Group Home Providers) to accomplish this task.

Recommendation 3

Probation has taken the following steps to enroll probation youth in skill-building and enrichment programs that include non-system students and provide our youth with opportunities for positive and enduring connections to prosocial adults:

- Development of a comprehensive mentoring program to match each Placement youth with an adult mentor. We are currently collaborating with DCFS on an on-going basis to implement a mentoring program in order for youth to develop a meaningful, trusting and lasting relationship with a nurturing adult that will support them toward their goals.
- JJCPA Housing-Based DPOs provide interventions and connects families to resources to assist with resolving family conflict, health/educational and/or any other crisis the family encounters. Additionally, DPO provides educational monitoring services and proactively works with school officials to ensure minors are enrolled in appropriate educational programs.
- Los Angeles City Parks (JJCPA After-School Enrichment programming) conducts a year-round Youth Employment Program that employs probation and at-risk youth at various City Park sites.
- JJCPA Clusters 1 and 4, through the All Peoples Christian Center, continue to conduct Leadership Academies based on the Pacific Institute concept.
- West Angeles Church of God Ten Point Initiative, designed to assist in the integration of males graduating from Camp, ages 15-18 years, provides life skills training, tutoring and mentoring. Each youth is assigned a volunteer mentor to assist them with daily functioning in the community and interact with the family, school officials and any social network that the minor is involved in.
- JJCPA Gender Community Programming provides workshops, mentoring, mother/daughter activities, and other family/daughter strengthening activities designed to empower girls to make better decisions for the future, increase the options they have for future employment and increase perception of who they are, with exposure to different cultural, recreational and educational events and social skill building.
- Cognitive-based anger management/effective decision-making programs conducted at two JJCPA Cluster 2 sites in South Los Angeles (Washington High School and Athens Park).
- JJCPA Cluster 2 Annual Summer Basketball Camp, which brings in community volunteers to conduct sessions from health to hygiene to personal achievement, personal empowerment and scholastic achievement. This three (3)-day event culminates in a basketball tournament designed to teach sportsmanship and provide youth with an opportunity to interact with prosocial adults. Facilitators include professional athletes, parents, community leaders and healthcare professionals.
- Annual Christmas Luncheon at Athens Park that is designed to honor families that have participated in programming and that support the efforts of moving the park to a more family-focused recreation site.

- Court ordered community service will be utilized to encourage youth to give back to their communities. Both youth and their communities will benefit from increased youth engagement.

Recommendation 4

Probation conducts annual youth surveys at the JJCPA Housing-Based and After-School Enrichment (Parks) sites to obtain feedback on safety issues and programs. Additionally, surveys to do mapping to create safety collaboratives resulted from a Summit held at Compton College. The feedback obtained through Summit surveys identified "unsafe zones" around the schools. This allowed for parental involvement in addressing survey concerns.

Additionally, Probation will utilize the Peer Quality Case Review process to engage Placement youth in their educational process. This input will be incorporated into the youth's case plan. Probation will also participate in on-going youth SPEAKOUTS (public meetings with former foster youth to identify and discuss issues that affected them while in foster care and after emancipation from foster care) with DCFS on a quarterly basis through our Emancipation Services and the California Youth Connection.

Recommendation 5

Probation utilizes parent empowerment meetings during the summer months to identify transition issues and provide parents with resources and a network with school officials to ensure that they are more proactively involved in the child's school transition. In collaboration with school officials, parent empowerment meetings focus on high school requirements, proficiency exams, dress codes and attendance expectations at designated JJCPA High School-Based sites. Additional sites will be added in the upcoming months.

Camp Aftercare DPOs expedite efforts to transition youth graduating from camp into the appropriate educational setting by working with identified school personnel and the youth's family. Efforts are made to contact the parent/guardian prior to the youth's release from camp to effectively address transition and school enrollment issues.

Placement and Independent Living DPOs will continue to utilize the Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) in order to better transition high school placement youth to continuing education. Staff will receive regular TILP training in order to facilitate this process.

Additionally, CBOs provide job training as well as support services for the Camp Aftercare and Intensive Gang Supervision probationers as they enter the world of work through the JJCPA High Risk/High Need (HRHN) Employment program. To accomplish the program goal of job placement, support services are delivered to participating

probationers (information on appropriate attire, job etiquette, chain of command and job performance).

Recommendation 6

Probation's JJCPA School-Based program, in collaboration with school officials and law enforcement partners implemented/re-established on-site school safety collaboratives designed to ensure safe passages for youth traveling to and from school in high crime areas. The safety collaborative planning groups solicited and engaged parents, students, neighborhood block club members, faith-based organizations, community-based providers and other governmental agencies to address issues youth faced on a daily basis that negatively impacted school attendance and academic performance. The County of Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) were major contributors to the success of the Safe Passages program in order to enhance the safety of youth traveling to and from school by reducing the amount of crime, racial tension and gang activity around JJCPA school sites. This was accomplished through: 1) High visibility patrols in areas around designated JJCPA school sites to intervene in unlawful activities; 2) Exchanging useful information in identifying criminals and criminal activities in and around School-Based sites and 3) Partnering closely with the community in an effort to more completely understand and address specific problems in communities around School-Based sites. Additional sites will be added in the up-coming months.

Recommendation 7

Probation will continue to work with ECC regarding the sharing of information among school districts, county departments, the juvenile courts and counsel for children who appear in those courts. A draft court order that would permit county departments and the youth's attorneys, while the youth is under the Juvenile Court's jurisdiction, to access pupil records, grades, transcripts, special education assessments, individual education plans and current attendance records was developed by the Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court. *Additionally, the Department is in the process of developing a consent form in order for the DPO to gain access to educational records for our probationers.*

Recommendation 8

Probation will continue to participate in discussions regarding an electronically based information system that includes the individual educational records of probation youth.

Recommendation 9

Probation will participate in the process with ECC to develop standard protocols for sharing information relevant to the school success of probation youth.

Recommendation 10

All Probation staff (Juvenile Field and Camp) will receive training on education code and special education in order to emphasize the importance of educational advocacy. Probation is in the process of hiring a consultant. An educational "toolkit" intervention along with education code training will be implemented by July 2006. Updated training on Assembly Bill 490 will also be provided to applicable staff as needed. Additionally, JJCPA School-Based DPOs will continue to attend annual in-service training with school officials and teachers.

Recommendation 11

The Department will collaborate with stakeholders to encourage additional opportunities for educationally focused cross training. Additionally, we will provide training across Juvenile Field programs regarding navigating the educational system, advocacy, parental/youth engagement and case planning.

Recommendation 12

The Department is committed to utilizing multidisciplinary team decision-making and case conferences in order to ensure that academic expectations are established for our youth and that educational plans are developed. Youth and parental engagement will continue to be emphasized in the case planning process.

Proposed Legislative Amendment

The federal legislative agenda has been revised to include language to support proposals that would provide child welfare agencies, juvenile courts, and court-appointed advocates with access to educational records on children who they are serving.

The following language is the proposed legislative amendment:

FERPA: Proposed 20 USC 1232g (b) (1) (K): State or local agency child protective services worker who is providing case management services for the child for the purposes of (1) ensuring that appropriate services are being provided to the child; and (2) promoting family reunification and permanency by reporting educational issues to the court. Any further dissemination of this information shall be in accordance with existing law, parent/guardian consent, or a valid court order.

Educational Case Plan

Elements of the ECC Sample Educational Case Plan are currently incorporated in our reports to court (a case plan is incorporated into our Pre-plea/Disposition court report), the Foster Care Case Plan for Suitable Placement recommendations and Transitional

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Independent Living Plans. As indicated, the Department is in the process of developing an automated, individualized juvenile case plan that is predicated on our validated assessment. We will consider the elements of the ECC Sample Educational Case Plan in the development of our Juvenile case plan.

The Department is fully committed to the implementation of the ECC Blueprint recommendations and looks forward to this continued work so that all of our youth have the educational opportunities they deserve.

If you have questions, please call me at (562) 940-2694.

RT:sh

c: David Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Chief Administrative Office

Joanne Sturgess, Acting Executive Officer
Executive Office, Board of Supervisors

Raymond G. Fortner Jr., County Counsel
Office of County Counsel

David Sanders, Ph.D., Director
Department of Children and Family Services

Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., Director
Department of Mental Health

Darline P. Robles, Ph.D, Superintendent
Los Angeles County Office of Education

Attachment III
Department of Mental Health
Report

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

MARVIN J. SOUTHARD, D.S.W.
Director

SUSAN KERR
Chief Deputy Director

RODERICK SHANER, M.D.
Medical Director



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DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

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550 SOUTH VERMONT AVENUE, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90020

April 4, 2006

TO: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Gloria Molina

FROM: Marvin J. Southard, DSW
Director, Department of Mental Health

SUBJECT: **FEBRUARY 14, 2006 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #S-1 RE:
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION COORDINATING
COUNCIL'S BLUEPRINT**

Direct the Director of Children and Family Services, Chief Probation Officer, Director of Mental Health, and the Superintendent of Schools, to report with a specific plan to implement the ECC Blueprint.

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health ECC Blueprint – Implementation Plan

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) endorses and supports the "Seven Basic Agreements" and corresponding recommendations in the Education Coordinating Council's *Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth*.

DMH currently provides mental health screening, assessment and treatment services to a significant number of children and youth who are in the care of the County's Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and/or the Probation Department. The academic success of these children and youth is enhanced by increasing their functional capacities within their individual school settings. This is a primary focus of the Department's efforts to serve their needs, in partnership with DCFS and Probation.

As the State of California's designated administrator of the Local Mental Health Plan, DMH provides mental health services based the following service philosophy:

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

Medi-Cal Services provided under the federal Rehabilitation Option focus on client needs, strengths, choices and involvement in treatment planning and implementation. The goal is to help clients take charge of their lives through informed decision-making. Services are based on the client's long-term goals/desired result(s) from mental health services concerning his/her own life and his/her diagnosis, functional impairment(s) symptoms, disabilities, life conditions and rehabilitation readiness. Services are focused on achieving specific, measurable objectives to support the client in accomplishing his/her desired results. Program staffing is multi-disciplinary and reflects the cultural, linguistic, ethnic, age, gender, sexual orientation and other social characteristics of the community that the program serves. Families, caregivers, human services agency personnel and other significant support persons are encouraged to participate in the planning and implementation process in meeting the client's needs, choices, responsibilities and desires. Programs are designed to use both licensed and non-licensed personnel who are experienced in providing services in the mental health field.

Based on the application of this service philosophy, DMH will focus on two principal goals in support of selected ECC Blueprint recommendations:

1. Ensuring Fidelity to the Service Philosophy

Develop comprehensive service planning and delivery approaches that would ensure fidelity to the "Rehabilitation Option" service philosophy. These would include active student/client and family caregiver engagement in mental health services design and delivery; teaming with mental health professionals, paraprofessionals, educators, DCFS and Probation staff, public health nurses, judges, advocates, and all other health and human services workers who provide "learning supports" that contribute to the students' school success; and "voice and choice" for the children, youth and family caregivers in determining what services would best support their strengths and needs.

DMH School-based Mental Health Services Coordinators for each of the eight Service Planning Areas meet monthly to review key issues and mechanisms for ensuring fidelity to the Rehab Option service philosophy. The School Mental Health Coordinators will continue to develop and monitor corresponding performance indicators for participating providers of school-based mental health services (including the use of evidence-based and best practices). This process will further inform the establishment of service standards for children enrolled in the Specialized Foster Care Mental Health Services programs in selected Service Areas as well as "Full Service Partnership" (FSP) focal populations who will be served as part of the LA County Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Community Services and Supports (CSS) Plan; these include children/youth (0-15) with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) "who are experiencing truancy, expulsion or suspension (or at risk of either), violent behaviors, drug possession or use, and/or suicidal or homicidal ideation."

2. Early Education

The DMH Prenatal to Five (P25) Program will pursue its primary objective of promoting the delivery of effective, family-centered, and culturally responsive mental health services and supports for children and their families by: a) enhancing local Service Planning Area agency/community capacity to address the mental health needs of infants, young children, and their families; b) supporting relevant education/training, consultation, and technical assistance for mental health service providers and other early care and education specialists; and c) collaborating with local, state, and national organizations to advocate for related program/policy development, implementation of best practices, and promoting public awareness of the importance of infant and early childhood mental health. These endeavors will be augmented through the DMH "ICARE" Network of over 200 mental health providers and representatives from early care and education programs/agencies, and will further contribute to increased support and resources to parents, relative caregivers, and foster parents to help them promote school readiness in their children.

FSP focal populations identified in MHSA CSS Plan also include: children 0-5 years who are involved with or at high risk of being detained by DCFS; and young children who are at high risk of being expelled from preschool and ultimately entering the juvenile justice system. The implementation phase of the CSS Plan will serve to address the needs of these high-risk children and thus contribute to related ECC Blueprint recommendations pertaining to prevention and early intervention.

In coordination with ECC leadership, DMH will provide an update to the Board of Supervisors within six months regarding progress toward the achievement of these goals.

Attachment IV

Los Angeles County Office of Education
Report



Los Angeles County Office of Education

Leading Educators • Supporting Students • Serving Communities

April 4, 2006

Darline P. Robles, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Los Angeles County
Board of Education

Thomas A. Saenz
President

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Rebecca J. Turrentine

To: Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Mayor
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Gloria Molina

From: Darline P. Robles, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

FEBRUARY 14, 2006 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #S-1 RE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION COORDINATING COUNCIL'S BLUEPRINT

Direct the ECC, in collaboration with the Superintendent of Schools, to convene a meeting of all school district Superintendents in the County in order to provide a briefing of the Blueprint and create strategies for implementing the recommendations pertinent to the school districts:

Dr. Darline Robles, Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools and Jose Huizar, Chair, Education Coordinating Council have invited school district superintendents to participate in a cross-system "Education Dialogue: Opportunities for Foster and Probation Youth," to explore ways to improve educational opportunities for students under the supervision of the courts and county departments as follows:

Wednesday, April 19, 2006
10:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Los Angeles County Office of Education – Room EC-281
9300 Imperial Highway, Downey, California

With the invitation, superintendents received a copy of "Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth.

District superintendents have been informed about the creation of the Education Coordinating Council (ECC) in November 2004 by the County Board of Supervisors to bring together the major stakeholders and policy makers responsible for the educational performance of foster and probation youth. The effort has already begun with school districts that have large numbers of system youth: Compton, LACOE, Lancaster, Long Beach, Pasadena and Pomona, county departments and the Juvenile Court.

At this first Education Dialogue meeting, superintendents will be given the forum to discuss strategies, opportunities, best-practices for serving foster and probation youth as well as district concerns and obstacles that hinder them from meeting the needs of students.

The prominent goals of the Education Dialogue are to: (1) Discuss effective means to eliminate the barriers faced by these youth; (2) Build a stronger coordinated effort; and (3) Build a better communication process among and within all of the various systems that are responsible for providing high quality service to these students.

Direct the Director of Children and Family Services, Chief Probation Officer, Director of Mental Health, and the Superintendent of Schools, to report with a specific plan to implement the ECC Blueprint.

Recommendation 1

The Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), through its early childhood initiatives, will ensure priority participation and enrollment opportunities to foster youth children, children living with foster parents, and children with parents who are in foster care and/or juvenile probation. Those initiatives include the following:

- Head Start-State Preschool
- Family Literacy Support Network
- Child Care Training Institute
- Early Advantage at WIC
- LA DADS
- CalSAFE
- Promoting Responsible Parenting
- LACOE Authorized Charter Schools

Recommendation 2

LACOE will make available classes to parents, relative caregivers, and foster parents to help them become good nurturers and ensure that their children are ready for school. A directory of resources to districts of services and educational resources will be made available through:

- The LACOE web-page
- Foster Youth Services Trainings
- AB490 Educational Liaisons
- Child Welfare and Attendance Regional Meetings

Recommendation 3

The county Superintendent will disseminate an annual bulletin to district superintendents to apprise them of their need to provide for the participation of foster and probation students in:

- after school enrichment programs,
- off-track tutoring,
- homework help programs, and
- any district-sponsored program or activity that will benefit and enhance learning opportunities.

Recommendation 4

LACOE will encourage schools to include probation youth on the Shared Decision Making Councils of the Juvenile Court and Community School (JCCS) and the Alternative Education programs, as appropriate. A majority of the Council shall be bargaining unit members.

Recommendation 5

LACOE will encourage school districts to provide ongoing information seminars to parents, caregivers, and foster and probation youth to prepare them to transition at each school benchmark, Pre-Kindergarten through High School. This information will be available through the following programs:

- Head Start-State Preschool
- Foster Youth Services
- Regional Occupational Programs
- Workforce Investment Act Programs
- The Parent Academy
- Transition, Special Needs
- Student Support Services

Recommendation 6

LACOE will remain actively involved in the Safe Schools program throughout the county by continuing to provide guidance and assistance through its Safe Schools Center. Resources provided will include information about:

- Gang Intervention/Prevention
- Bullying
- Classroom Management
- School Crisis Intervention

Recommendation 7

LACOE will work with the school districts and other agency partners to establish a clear understanding of the federal, state and local laws regarding sharing of information for school aged youth.

Recommendation 8

LACOE will continue to participate in the development of an electronically-based information system.

Recommendation 9

LACOE will convene a county-wide meeting of district superintendents to discuss strategies to develop a standardized protocol for identification of services to foster and probation youth. Major stakeholders and policy makers responsible for the educational performance of these students will participate.

Recommendation 10

LACOE will continue to provide a directory of resources and training to all AB490 educational liaisons regarding meeting the educational and emotional needs of foster and probation youth.

DPR/EDL:dr



Los Angeles County
Education Coordinating Council

Raising Educational Achievement for Foster and Probation Youth

August 14, 2008

To: Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Sharon G. Watson 
Lead Consultant, Education Coordinating Council

**PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN
"EXPECTING MORE; A BLUEPRINT FOR RAISING THE EDUCATIONAL
ACHIEVEMENT OF FOSTER AND PROBATION YOUTH"**

At its meeting on February 14, 2006, your Board approved "*Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth*," developed by the Education Coordinating Council (ECC), and instructed the ECC to report its progress in implementing the recommendations in that document to your Board every six months. The first Progress Report was delivered to your Board on August 14, 2006, the second on February 14, 2007, the third on August 14, 2007 and the fourth on February 14, 2008; this is now the fifth report.

During the past six months the ECC and its members have made tremendous strides in implementing the recommendations in *Expecting More*, and we thank the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation and the Interagency Operations Group for the significant financial support that made a lot of this progress possible. Much is being accomplished in the quest to raise the academic performance of children and youth under the supervision of DCFS and Probation, especially in those areas requiring inter-departmental and/or inter-sector collaboration.

For example, the ECC has been a key member of the Comprehensive Education Reform Committee (CERC), chaired by Chief Probation Officer Taylor, which has just completed a plan for strengthening educational services to probation youth in the juvenile halls and camps. In partnership with the CPC, ECC helped bring the views of a host of other public and private organizations to the attention of the CERC. This plan will be considered by your Board on September 9th. Four workgroups have been established to begin addressing several of the plan's major recommendations—Assessment and Curriculum Re-structuring, Electronic Data Exchange, MOU/Report Card Development and Dependent Charter School. Each of these workgroups are, in turn, helping to

implement the ECC's Blueprint, especially with respect to Recommendations 3, 5, 7, 8, and 11.

In addition, ECC was a strong supporter of the Small Schools Resolution adopted by the LAUSD Board of Education on June 24, 2008.

Some of the key achievements with respect to individual Blueprint recommendations are:

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Recommendation #1: Higher numbers of children in the care of DCFS, and the children of foster and probation youth, should be enrolled in high-quality early intervention, care, and education programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive.

- To accomplish this recommendation, the ECC, at its April meeting, strongly urged the integration of the child welfare and early care and education systems and adopted a plan for an initiative—*Making the Connections in Los Angeles County Between Child Welfare and Early Care and Education*—to make this happen. Major factors driving the need for this initiative include:
 - There is **no single point of entry for the early care and education “system”**; it is a mix of public funds, informal babysitting, entrepreneurial businesses, and full-day, part-day and voucher program services, each with different eligibility requirements, regulations and services. This has led to an extremely long **waiting list of 48,000 children** on the County's centralized eligibility list for subsidized child development services.
 - Over **20,000 children under the age of six had open cases with the Department of Children and Family Services in 2006**. Of these, 41% were infants a year old or younger, with the majority living in SPA 6 (19.1%), followed by SPAs 2, 3, 7 and 8.
 - **An estimated \$1.4 billion in child care subsidies and services for qualifying families is received** by the County from the California Department of Education each year; **almost \$162 million of these funds has been returned** to the State over the past three years.

Given the importance of connecting child welfare and early education leaders and the ECC's ability to bring key stakeholders together, the Council agreed to be the catalyst for implementing the *Making the Connections* Initiative. Several activities are now underway to address the above challenges.

- ECC is partnering with county departments and DCFS Prevention Initiative Demonstration Project (PIDP) lead agencies to determine how to maximize available child care subsidies for young DCFS children in the highest need communities.
- DCFS and the Office of Child Care are looking at linking the child abuse and neglect prevention training, offered by the Child Abuse Prevention

- All 8 PIDP agencies have embraced the core prevention values of the *Making the Connections* Initiative: community-capacity building; integration and alignment of efforts; and interdepartmental collaboration. Their efforts for this year range from building community action/social networks that will focus on the place-based needs of families in specific communities to implementing resource centers that will link and provide support services and resources to community-referred families. Common to all of these efforts is the focus on supporting families, parents/caregivers and children to thrive in positive learning environments.

- Los Angeles County Office of Education's Head Start Program, DCFS and the PIDP lead agencies are working to ensure that DCFS children and families accessing services through the lead agencies are connected to Head Start programs throughout the County. Head Start offers a comprehensive range of integrated services to children and their families, including medical and oral health care, nutrition, parent involvement, mental health services, services for children with special needs, early childhood development, literacy programs for children and parents, and family support. As LACOE operates the largest Head Start program in the nation, serving almost 24,000 three to five year olds, infants, toddlers, and pregnant women, it is a critical resource for young foster children in Los Angeles and their families. These agencies are now identifying what opportunities exist for more effective outreach and enrollment procedures.

- The Department of Mental Health, in collaboration with the Center for Nonviolent Education and Parenting and PACE Head Start, successfully designed and implemented the *It Takes A Community* (ITC) curriculum to support parents and caregivers in promoting the social-emotional development and emotional intelligence of their young children. Over 50 parents and caregivers participated in this initial program which will soon be expanded to other early care and education settings. ITC serves as a major strategy to strengthen families and help prevent child abuse and will be used as one of the guiding frameworks for staff/program development, service integration and community-building models to be implemented at sites such as Magnolia Place.

- Probation's Promoting Healthy Families program, which is being implemented through a Family Resource Center at each juvenile hall, promotes family reunification through a broad range of services for parents of detained youth that address the multiple needs of these youth and their families. This program focuses on empowering each family to successfully handle difficulties that may arise with their youth, on developing a support network for each family, and on empowering youth to cope with family, peer, school, and neighborhood problems.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation #4: Youth should be systematically engaged and meaningfully involved in designing, implementing, and evaluating the programs, activities, and events in which they will participate.

- United Friends of the Children is conducting an internship program for foster youth this summer, placing them in a variety of non-profit organizations that match their interests.

As one of the participating organizations, the ECC is hosting Gail Yen, a former foster youth who was reunited with her family almost two years ago. Gail is an excellent student and will be entering her senior year of high school in September. She plans to attend a 4-year college and major in political science, so the ECC has arranged for her to also work, two afternoons a week, in Assemblymember Anthony Portantino's office and two days a week with the countywide Transition-Age Youth Coordinator in the Chief Executive Office. Gail has already been extremely helpful in shaping the ECC's work and theirs.

- Higher Education and Transitional/Emancipation Resources and Services were two of the topics highlighted at The California Youth Connection's annual Policy Conference on August 11, 2008. Foster youth throughout the state expressed their concerns and, on the final day of the Conference, presented recommendations for local and statewide policy and practice changes to an invited audience of policy-makers and stakeholders. Attendees then engaged in small group discussions about these youth recommendations.
- Probation's Teen Council program provides the opportunity for juvenile hall youth to campaign to become a group/unit representative, a position which encourages them to actively participate in the day to day activities of their living unit. The Teen Council helps youth see that their input is valued and that their program-related suggestions are taken seriously.
- The Probation Department's Placement Services Bureau has developed a Youth and Family Engagement Initiative which will be implemented this fiscal year. Youth will be creating and evaluating the programs and services which serve them and will provide consultation to the Department and group homes about the policies and services that affect their lives.

Recommendation #5: Families, caregivers, and agency staff should pay greater attention to preparing DCFS and Probation children and youth for transitions to preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school, adult education, vocational school, college, and employment, and for transfers between schools.

- The Juvenile Court is working with Probation to revise protocols for youth being sent to probation camps, including eliminating the shorter camp stays that cause educational havoc for many youth. The target date for longer stays will coincide with implementation of the department's camp re-design project. In addition,

college, and. several ideas for legislative remedies emerged that the Assemblymember agreed to pursue.

Recommendation #6: The ECC should participate in and work to align local efforts to create safer schools (including passages to and from), particularly within and among the seven school districts represented on the ECC.

- The Department of Mental Health will participate as one of the collaborative partners with the Los Angeles and Alhambra school districts, who were among the select few Southern California Local Education Agencies to be awarded federally-funded Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative grants.
- The Probation Department has been in the forefront in working with schools, law enforcement agencies and neighborhood stakeholders to develop and establish School Safety Collaboratives/Safe Passages programs for youth traveling to and from schools in high-crime areas. A recent State Attorney General's report credited the efforts of Probation, school officials and law enforcement agencies with increasing the safety of students on their way to and from school. Students at participating schools reported that they have noticed the presence of more adults in and around their schools and feel safer.

DATA AND INFORMATION-SHARING

Recommendation #7: The enhanced sharing of information among school districts, county departments, the juvenile courts, and counsel for children who appear in those courts should be assured by concurrently working to:

Resolve differing views about what federal law and California law allow, especially regarding federal confidentiality regulations, so that placing agencies (such as DCFS and Probation) and counsel for the child can access school records without a court order or authorization from a parent/guardian/holder of education rights, thereby enabling them to carry out their responsibility to meet the educational needs of children in their care

Establish a clear and consistent understanding of federal and state confidentiality laws among school districts, DCFS, Probation, and children's counsel so that information necessary for school success is routinely shared in a timely and effective manner

Pursue amendments to the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), if needed, to clarify that child welfare agencies and legal representatives are able to independently access, share, and receive educational information with and from all school districts

- Development of a comprehensive assessment tool for foster youth that will help guide the development of specialized education plans based on individual student needs and strengths. A team comprised of school personnel, social workers, DCFS education consultants, caregivers, and the youth themselves will oversee the implementation of these plans.
- Education of caregivers and caseworkers on how to activate available services and supports within their youth's school district and community

Student evaluations using the newly designed assessment form began on August 11. If the projects succeed during this pilot year, the goal is to roll the model out countywide.

Recommendation #8: The ECC should work with the Chief Administrative Office, county departments, school districts, and placement provider agencies to ensure the development of an electronically based information system that includes the individual educational records of DCFS and probation youth.

- In conjunction with the pilot projects described under Recommendation #7, the ECC is collaborating with the Montebello and Pomona Unified School Districts to create and begin testing a pilot educational database system within the 2008-09 school year.

SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT

Recommendation #9: Educational liaisons and school-based staff should be provided with the information they are requesting about who these youth are, the names of those responsible for their education (holders of educational rights, caregivers, caseworkers, attorneys, etc.), how best to contact them, and what services and supports are available for these youth.

- Completed data matches between DCFS, Probation, and the Long Beach, Los Angeles, Montebello and Pomona Unified School Districts to determine the names of shared youth, which schools they attend, and how they are faring academically compared with other district students.
- Developed a contact information sheet for school personnel to use for education-related questions regarding foster and probation youth. This information sheet was distributed at the ECC/LACOE School Superintendents meeting on June 18th.
- The Juvenile Court is now requiring that the holder of education rights be listed on every minute order issued by the court. The court's information technology section is designing a screen that will be added to the computerized case management system so that court clerks are prompted to fill in that name at every court hearing, reminding the judge if it is not already in the file. In the meantime, clerks

Recommendation #11: County departments, school districts, and the judiciary should cross-train key stakeholder groups on their collective and individual responsibilities for ensuring that foster and probation youth receive a solid education.

- The Probation Department and LACOE have developed an MOU that outlines their respective individual and joint responsibilities for the education of probation youth housed in juvenile halls and camps. Included in this document will be a “report card” on the educational outcomes achieved that will be regularly shared with the Board of Supervisors.
- DCFS and Long Beach Unified School District staff have begun meeting monthly to discuss issues facing foster youth students in that district, and clarifying each other’s roles and responsibilities regarding youth academic achievement.
- The Fourth Supervisorial District, Department of Mental Health, Probation Department and the Children’s Planning Council are co-sponsoring a major “transformational learning opportunity” in October 2008 for over 200 participants, including department staff and selected providers. The focus of the day will be on understanding how trauma, violence, substance abuse, and other major risk factors impact children and youth in Los Angeles communities. This event will provide a framework for ongoing training and subsequent forums to accelerate system transformation, culture change, and prevention-focused efforts underway in these and other county departments, with the assistance of key community partners.
- In the spring, the DCFS Pomona regional office and the Pomona USD conducted a joint training session for the staff of both offices. In preliminary conversations with key leadership from the DCFS office and the district’s Child Development Unit, it became clear that opportunities to understand each other’s systems and the regulations that each entity was bound by were extremely limited. (For instance, in a conversation about eligibility requirements for early education programs, DCFS staff learned that immigration status is not requested for programs operated by school districts, a fact that could help resolve a major access issue for some DCFS children.) As a result, a joint training session was held on July 10 at Pomona USD for over 100 children’s services workers and school-based child development staff on their programs, eligibility requirements, and important regulations.

Recommendation #12: DCFS/Probation caseworkers, caregivers, and the courts should each be accountable for the educational success of foster and probation youth through a three-pronged approach:

DCFS and Probation caseworkers shall ensure, using multidisciplinary team decision-making and case conferences, that academic expectations are established for

As can be seen by all of the above, ECC members, partners and community organizations are actively engaged in making *Expecting More* a reality and the Council looks forward to reporting further progress in its next report in February 2009. If you should have any questions or require any additional information, your staff may contact the ECC at: (213) 974-5967.

cc: Chief Executive Officer
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Director, Children and Family Services
Chief Probation Officer
Director, Mental Health
Superintendent, Office of Education
Education Coordinating Council



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street, Room 713, Los Angeles, California 90012
(213) 974-1101
<http://ceo.lacounty.gov>

WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

August 25, 2009

To: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. T. Fujioka", is written over the printed name of the Chief Executive Officer.

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN "EXPECTING MORE: A BLUEPRINT FOR RAISING THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF FOSTER AND PROBATION YOUTH"

At its meeting on February 14, 2006, your Board approved "*Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth*," developed by the Education Coordinating Council (ECC), and instructed the ECC to report its progress in implementing the recommendations in that document to your Board every six months. The first Progress Report was delivered to your Board on August 14, 2006; this is now the seventh report.

Because of the ECC's accomplishments over the past three years and the need to further coordinate the efforts of County departments in the education area, at its meeting on March 17, 2009, your Board approved the institutionalization of the ECC within the Chief Executive Office (CEO) Service Integration Branch (SIB) effective July 1, 2009. Further, your Board approved the ECC's Strategic Plan which includes the goals the ECC will be working on from this point forward. This Strategic Plan incorporates the twelve *Expecting More* recommendations into five overarching strategies and focuses greater attention on implementation of its principles.

This move into the CEO/SIB included a staffing structure change, moving from a team of consultants to one full-time staff. With the ECC now beginning its sixth year and focusing on specific goals, and the workload and time constraints it now faces under this new structure, the ECC will start submitting its Strategic Plan update to your Board annually.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

**Please Conserve Paper – This Document and Copies are Two-Sided
Intra-County Correspondence Sent Electronically Only**

Some of the key achievements with respect to individual Strategic Plan strategies are:

STRATEGY 1: Ensure that the Dependency Education Pilot Project is successfully completed and introduced Countywide.

Objective: Complete implementation of the pilot project now underway in the Montebello Unified School District and the Pomona Unified School District. Glean lessons learned through its evaluation process and develop strategies for rolling out the model in all Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) regional offices.

As you know, this pilot project was conceived by the First Supervisorial District, in partnership with the CEO, ECC, DCFS, and the Montebello and Pomona Unified School Districts, and launched in April 2008. As a first step, the ECC conducted data matches between these districts and DCFS which highlighted the low academic achievement of DCFS youth in these districts (Note: the average GPA for DCFS youth attending these districts was a 1.39) and identified which schools they were enrolled in. The First Supervisorial District funded three dedicated non-case-carrying DCFS social workers to provide services on-site at high school campuses within these districts, two at the Montebello Unified School District and one at the Pomona Unified School District. Currently, there are 76 participants between both districts in the pilot. Using the assessment and case plan tools created by the project's implementation team, these on-site social workers complete a comprehensive educational case history assessment for each student, develop and implement an educational case plan through an individualized multidisciplinary team, connect students to local resources, and work to resolve any educational issues that are identified. They also work closely with each student's primary social worker to coordinate management of the case.

Casey Family Programs (CFP) is conducting an evaluation of the results from this project. To facilitate this, the ECC worked with CFP-funded local contractors to compile a complete data set for all pilot students. A matched comparison group of foster youth not enrolled in the pilot was then created and shared with CFP on August 14, 2009. This data set contained information on grades, attendance and standardized test scores from the 2007-08 and 2008-09 school years, as well as data from individual interviews and focus groups held with a random selection of pilot students, staff and administrators. Results from this analysis will be available in October 2009.

Preliminary results calculated at the end of the school year have already shown some promising trends: 56 percent of pilot students who graduated from high school in June would not have done so if not for intervention of the pilot project, and 83 percent of graduating pilot students have enrolled in either a 2-year or 4-year college compared to the national average of 20 percent for foster youth. These results are very encouraging, exceeding initial expectations and demonstrating its value.

Given the project's promise, plans are now underway to expand the pilot to the El Monte Union High School District and Bassett, Hacienda/La Puente and El Rancho Unified School Districts, using a modified approach. Instead of utilizing non-case-carrying social workers as the leads for developing educational assessments and plans, each youth's primary social worker will now be responsible for these duties. To make this work, social worker caseloads will consist entirely of students attending a particular district and their siblings. If this approach proves to be effective, it would permit further expansion of this model countywide.

STRATEGY 2: Work closely with the Probation Department (Probation) to ensure that the Comprehensive Educational Reform for the Juvenile Halls and Camps is successfully institutionalized.

Objective: Assist Probation in implementing the 35 recommendations outlined in the Comprehensive Educational Reform Report adopted by the Board of Supervisors on October 14, 2008.

In addition to participating as a member of the Comprehensive Educational Reform Committee (CERC) which wrote and is implementing the reform report, the ECC is a member of the Camp-To-Community Transition Workgroup. This workgroup, chaired by Juvenile Court Judge Donna Groman, designed and is now piloting a protocol that will ensure a smoother transition of probation youth back into their community schools. The pilot is being conducted with youth exiting Camp Holton to Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) schools. This protocol dictates that, 90 days before a youth is to be released, Probation, Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), and LAUSD staff complete an assessment of the youth's educational needs to determine the most appropriate school placement. A multidisciplinary team meeting is then held with the youth to solidify a plan for enrolling the youth in school within three days of his/her release date. Once enrolled in school, LACOE transition counselors will follow-up with the youth and their family for six months, providing any additional help that is needed. The first "class" of students in this new project was released from camp Holton in July 2009. Plans are now underway to expand this pilot to Camps Onizuka and Challenger.

One of the key recommendations of the CERC report was the hiring of a Director of School Services. A job description for this position was posted in February 2009, and interviews of the top five candidates were conducted last week by the Chief Probation Officer. It is hoped that this position will be filled very shortly.

Another key recommendation of the report—the introduction of a charter school at one of the camps—is on hold, due to concerns being raised by the California Teachers

Association and the Los Angeles County Education Association. Probation and LACOE staff are currently exploring other avenues for moving forward.

An Academic Advisory Committee comprised of experts from several local universities and chaired by Dr. Jacquelyn McCroskey, a professor of social work at the University of Southern California, has been created to determine what outcomes should be measured to properly evaluate this effort.

The Juvenile Court has decided to lengthen camp stays to either 5 to 7 months or 7 to 9 months to allow enough time for the educational and therapeutic interventions being introduced at the camps to have a greater impact on the youth who reside there. This policy will go into effect this fall and should be very helpful in building the academic foundation camp youth need to succeed in community schools.

STRATEGY 3: Partner with the Los Angeles County Office of Child Care (OCC) to significantly increase the number of DCFS children under the age of six—and the children of DCFS and probation youth—who are enrolled in high-quality early care and education programs.

Objective: Work with the OCC, DCFS, and Probation to develop a set of procedures for enrolling DCFS children under the age of six, and the children of DCFS and probation youth, into high-quality early care and education programs.

DCFS has now committed to the goal of enrolling 4-year-olds under their care in early care and education programs. The ECC will partner with the OCC to create a plan for implementing this new commitment in the months to come. The department has begun by supporting its Santa Clarita office's effort to enroll its age-eligible young children in local Head Start programs. This is an important culture shift for DCFS, one that should improve school readiness, strengthen parenting skills, and ensure better outcomes for DCFS families.

To evaluate the impact of this approach, DCFS is launching a longitudinal study in Long Beach to measure the overall effects of early care and education programs on DCFS children. A sample of children enrolled in these programs and a comparison sample of non-enrolled children will be tracked over time to determine if one group fares better than the other, and, if so, what specific factors made the difference. These data can then drive the types of services and supports young children in the department receive in the future.

STRATEGY 4: Collaborate with youth development programs, County departments, school districts and cities to significantly increase the number of DCFS and probation

youth participating in after-school and summer extracurricular and enrichment programs.

Objective: Work with DCFS and Probation to develop a set of procedures for enrolling DCFS and probation youth in after-school and summer extracurricular and enrichment programs.

The Dependency Education Pilot Project team is now field testing ways to connect its youth to extracurricular/enrichment activities. The most significant barriers to youth participation are lack of transportation and lack of free time in youths' overloaded schedules. Progress has been made in circumventing these barriers through identifying on-campus activities that system youth can participate in immediately after-school. As a result, 51 percent of pilot youth are now participating in some type of extracurricular activity.

With the creation of 3,000 youth jobs this summer using a portion of the County's ARRA funds, the ECC will work with DCFS, Probation, and Community and Senior Services (CSS) to institute a protocol for connecting a significant portion of system youth to this jobs program.

The ECC's executive director was recently appointed to the Los Angeles City Workforce Investment Board Youth Council which is focusing on creating additional youth employment opportunities. One of its emerging goals is to provide incentives to employers for hiring system youth.

An initial resource list of free/low-cost after-school and summer enrichment activities has been compiled and incorporated onto the ECC's website at: www.educationcoordinatingcouncil.org. The ECC is now working with its members to expand this list, emphasizing those programs that are open to serving system youth and that understand their unique needs.

STRATEGY 5: Resolve remaining barriers to allow for the sharing of educational information between County departments and school districts throughout Los Angeles County.

Objective: Create an electronic data transferring process for sharing educational records with Los Angeles County case managers.

ECC members and partners have developed a mechanism that will allow school districts to share education records with DCFS, the Juvenile Court, and all counsel of record that solves, once and for all, the decade-long disagreement about Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) compliance. This mechanism will add

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language to the minute orders generated at disposition and subsequent hearings for DCFS youth that orders a child's school district to share his/her education information with the DCFS case manager. Once the minute order language and protocol for sharing this information is finalized, a similar procedure will be created for probation youth.

The ECC presented this minute order language and protocol on August 19, 2009 to the California Child Welfare Council Data Linkage and Information Sharing Committee as our County's solution to FERPA. State officials were very encouraged by what Los Angeles County has developed and want to learn more about our model to determine whether it could be instituted statewide.

Now that the FERPA dilemma has been resolved, a letter to the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families is being drafted to clarify under what circumstances education records can be electronically shared with our Child Welfare Services/Case Management System without violating compliance with the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS). Once the SACWIS problem is solved, the County will be finally able to move forward in developing an electronic data transferring process for sharing educational records of system youth.

As can be seen by all of the above, ECC members, partners and community organizations are all actively engaged in accomplishing the ECC's Strategic Plan goals and the Council looks forward to making further significant progress. If you have any questions or require any additional information, please let me know or your staff may contact Carrie Miller at (213) 974-5967 or via e-mail at cmiller@ceo.lacounty.gov.

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KH:CDM

c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Acting County Counsel
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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

August 17, 2010

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors
GLORIA MOLINA
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District

ZEV YAROSLAVSKY
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN "EXPECTING MORE: A BLUEPRINT FOR RAISING THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF FOSTER AND PROBATION YOUTH"

At its meeting on February 14, 2006, your Board approved "*Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth*" developed by the Education Coordinating Council (ECC), and instructed the ECC to report its progress in implementing the recommendations in that document to your Board every six months. When the ECC became a part of the Chief Executive Office (CEO), Service Integration Branch (SIB), in July 2009 and adopted a smaller staffing structure, your Board approved the ECC's Strategic Plan, which focuses on five specific goals drawn from the 12 recommendations in *Expecting More*. The ECC is reporting its progress on this Plan annually. The first Progress Report was delivered to your Board on August 14, 2006; this is now the eighth report.

Some of the key achievements with respect to the five Strategic Plan strategies are:

STRATEGY 1: Ensure that the Dependency Education Pilot Project is successfully completed and introduced Countywide.

Objective: Complete implementation of the pilot project in the Montebello Unified School District (MUSD) and the Pomona Unified School District (PUSD). Glean lessons learned through its evaluation process, and develop strategies for rolling out the model in all Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) regional offices.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

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Status: Over the past two years, this pilot project, conceived by the First District, has successfully met its goal of demonstrating that, when DCFS and school districts collaborate to prioritize education for foster youth, these students have significantly better educational outcomes. MUSD and PUSD enroll more foster students than most districts in the County, and the average Grade Point Average (GPA) for DCFS youth attending their schools was 1.39 at the start of the project. To date, a total of 277 foster students have participated in the pilot program, which has recently been expanded to include the El Monte Union High School District (EMUHSD) and the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District (HLPUSD). Since the start of the project:

- The GPA for DCFS students attending MUSD and PUSD has increased 25 percent;
- Over 1,020 course credits have been recovered which has enabled, in some cases, project students to advance a full grade level;
- 76 percent of foster students (35 out of 46) have graduated from high school;
- 74 percent of those who have graduated (26 out of 35) would not have done so without the intervention of the project; and
- 77 percent of graduates (27 out of 35) have enrolled in either a two-year or four-year college, compared to the national average of 20 percent for foster youth.

A June graduate had this to say about the project: "Before, I didn't really care about school, and I didn't think I could go to college; it wasn't in the plan. My school-based social worker sort of forced me to apply to schools I didn't think I had a chance to get into, but I got in – UC San Diego, USC, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, Clark Atlanta, and Cal State Long Beach. I call her every day."

These results are very encouraging, exceeding initial expectations. In recognition of this early success, the project was honored by the State of California during National Foster Care Month in 2009 for *Changing a Lifetime*; it received a Special Merit Award from the Los Angeles County Quality and Productivity Commission in October 2009; and it was a 2010 National Association of Counties Achievement Award Winner.

Given the project's positive results and the desire to expand it to additional school districts, DCFS decided to develop and test an alternative model that would be less expensive to implement and that would, at the same time, restore one of the basic duties of primary social workers. In this model, instead of utilizing non-case-carrying social workers as the leads for developing educational assessments and plans on school campuses, each youth's primary social worker would be responsible for these duties. To make this work, social worker caseloads would consist entirely of students attending a particular school district, along with their siblings.

While the original model continues to be used in MUSD and PUSD, the revised model was launched in EMUHSD in November 2009 and in HLPUSD in March 2010, with four primary caseworkers assigned to each school district. As this modified approach appears to be working effectively, several additional school districts are being considered for participation in this program. Data matches are currently being conducted between DCFS and these prospective school districts to determine which schools have large enough numbers of foster students to warrant the assignment of out-stationed social workers.

A comprehensive user manual has been drafted that lays out the specific program components that have made the project effective, delineates the protocols and procedures for achieving the desired educational results, and includes copies of the assessment and case planning tools created for this project.

Casey Family Programs completed an evaluation of the first phase of the pilot program in October 2009, and is now completing an evaluation of the project's second year, which includes a comparison of the two models. These results should be available in the fall.

In recognition of the pilot project's evolution during the past year, it is now known as the Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program.

Last week, the Children Youth and Family Collaborative (CYFC) was awarded a \$3.5 million Federal *Investing in Innovation Fund* grant from the Department of Education to provide, over the next five years, academic remediation services to foster youth participating in the Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program in MUSD and PUSD. Leveraging the funds donated by the First District for the operation of this program, CYFC will use some of its grant monies to hire an additional secondary (non-case-carrying) social worker and a school counselor dedicated solely to program students. This grant should go a long way in helping DCFS students in these school districts raise their educational achievement even more significantly.

STRATEGY 2: Work closely with the Probation Department to ensure that the Comprehensive Educational Reform for the Juvenile Halls and Camps is successfully institutionalized.

Objective: Assist the Probation Department in implementing the 35 recommendations outlined in the Comprehensive Educational Reform Report adopted by the Board of Supervisors on October 14, 2008.

Status: Created through a motion by Supervisor Knabe, the Comprehensive Educational Reform Committee (CERC) wrote and is overseeing implementation of the Reform Report. In addition to serving as a member of CERC, the ECC is working with

CERC's Camp Scott/Scudder School Committee to develop a unique pilot program that will offer a "charter school-like" alternative to the traditional Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) academic model. As reported to your Board previously, it has been very difficult to move forward with the CERC recommendation to establish a charter school at one of the juvenile camps due to concerns raised by State and local teachers' unions. Instead, in partnership with the local union and the New Village Charter School, the Probation Department and LACOE have begun to incorporate an innovative educational approach based on the acclaimed Big Picture national model, which believes in educating one student at a time using an individualized, student-centered school culture and a project-oriented curriculum. This approach, which is illustrated through the school's new motto, *Respect for Self, Respect for Others*, is already showing some success and will be fully launched in September 2010.

To ease the transition of Camp Scott/Scudder School students into schools in their home communities when they complete their camp stays, they will be transferred, whenever possible, to schools that share as many characteristics of Big Picture schools as possible, and that would provide a compatible culture and programming. The ECC has arranged a meeting at the end of this month between Camp Scott/Scudder School Committee members and the superintendents of Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) eight local school districts to identify the most appropriate schools in their districts for Camp Scott/Scudder students to transfer to, and determine the most effective process for making these transfers successful. A similar meeting has been arranged with Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) staff.

Another key CERC report recommendation that the ECC has been involved with has been the hiring of a Director of School Services for the Probation Department. This individual would oversee the Department's educational programs and initiatives at the juvenile halls and camps and serve as its liaison to LACOE and other school districts (including LAUSD and LBUSD) with high numbers of probation youth. Candidate interviews were initially conducted in late 2009 and resumed this summer following the arrival of the County's new Chief Probation Officer. The ECC participated as a member of the interview panel, and the Chief Probation Officer selected a candidate in July. The new Director, Jeremy Nichols, began his employment on August 2, 2010.

In June, CERC re-established its Steering Committee to review the 35 recommendations for education reform adopted by your Board in 2008, and determine what can be done to spur the implementation of those recommendations not yet completed. The ECC is a member of this committee, which is being chaired by the Department's new Director of School Services.

STRATEGY 3: Partner with the Los Angeles County Office of Child Care (OCC) to significantly increase the number of DCFS children under the age of six, and the children of DCFS and probation youth, who are enrolled in high-quality early care and education programs.

Objective: Work with the OCC, DCFS, and the Probation Department to develop a set of procedures for enrolling DCFS children under the age of six, and the children of DCFS and probation youth, in high-quality early care and education programs.

Status: In October 2009, DCFS began a historic, intensive effort to refer 90 percent of its children under the age of six in high-quality early care and education programs. Since that time, the Department has made considerable progress towards achieving this goal. Many partners have worked with the Department to increase enrollment, including LACOE, Los Angeles Universal Preschool, Policy Roundtable for Child Care, and the Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA). Three formal enrollment projects between DCFS and Head Start/Early Head Start have been developed and tested over the past year: the Long Beach Head Start collaborative; the Pomona and El Monte collaborative with LACOE Head Start; and the East Los Angeles collaborative with LACOE Head Start. As a result, the number of young, dependent children enrolled in early childhood care and education programs in these geographic areas has almost doubled from about 30 percent to between 50 and 60 percent.

Further, ACHSA is encouraging its foster family agencies (FFAs) to enroll the young children placed in their care in high-quality early education programs. Thirty-three FFAs with responsibility for over 1,200 children under the age of five have agreed to participate so far, and a DCFS pilot in Santa Fe Springs is targeting another 560 children. LACOE is also working with the other 21 Head Start grantees in the County to make certain that foster and homeless children served by DCFS are given priority enrollment in their programs. In addition, LACOE has secured an agreement with these grantees to funnel all referrals through LACOE, so that it can ensure that caregivers make the proper connection with a Head Start program and successfully enroll the children in their care.

A key issue hampering these collaborative efforts is the incompatibility of electronic databases between partners, preventing DCFS staff from smoothly connecting with other agencies. The progress being made under Strategy 5 of the ECC's Strategic Plan should help resolve this barrier.

The OCC is currently in the process of convening the County department members of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care (DCFS, Probation Department, Department of Mental Health and the Department of Public Social Services) to enroll their youth or the children of their clients in high-quality early care and education programs. Each department will use the same Strengthening Families Framework for this effort to

facilitate communication and the integration of services across departments and with community-based organizations.

In the coming months, DCFS will be working closely with the OCC, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, County departments and community networks to develop a strategic plan that will promote the importance of early childhood development for system youth and their enrollment in high quality early care and education programs, and delineate how these services can be utilized by DCFS clients.

Finally, the Juvenile Court has initiated a Court Teams Pilot Project to keep infants under the supervision of the court safe and healthy, achieve a higher rate of permanency for these children, and prevent their re-entry into the foster care system. Young biological families in the Vermont Corridor DCFS Office area are being recruited and will be partnered with a caregiver from the DCFS Fost/Adopt Program or with a relative. These trained caregivers will serve as mentors to parent participants, using a shared parenting approach that will help families successfully reunify with their children. All project parents will be encouraged to enroll their infants and toddlers in Early Head Start or other high-quality child development programs.

STRATEGY 4: Collaborate with youth development programs, County departments, school districts and cities to significantly increase the number of DCFS and probation youth participating in after-school and summer extracurricular and enrichment programs.

Objective: Work with DCFS and the Probation Department to develop a set of procedures for enrolling DCFS and probation youth in after-school and summer extracurricular and enrichment programs.

Status: Since the beginning of 2010, LAUSD's Beyond the Bell after-school enrichment program has been working to connect youth in foster care to summer activities that focus on social, emotional and academic skill-building. Thirty-nine counselors have been stationed at district schools and are, collectively, responsible for between 200 and 300 kindergarten through 12th grade foster students. Counselors working with high school students are concentrating on credit recovery, enrolling students in summer school, and following up on attendance. For kindergarten through eighth grade students, for whom no summer school is available, they are focusing on enrichment programs at 150 sites in the district, including participation in a week-long camp in the Angeles National Forest for 300 foster students in the fourth through eighth grades that offers academic and social components, as well as traditional outdoor activities.

The Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program is continuing to connect its youth to extracurricular and enrichment activities. Progress has been made in identifying on-campus activities that system youth can participate in immediately after-school to

reduce transportation barriers and make the best use of limited student free time. As a result, 70 percent of program students attending MUSD and almost 50 percent of program students attending PUSD are now participating in an extracurricular activity.

A total of 875 foster youth are currently receiving academic remediation services from CYFC, as well as enrichment activities that include fashion clubs, fitness and sports, skateboarding and arts and crafts. Further, 176 youth who have transitioned out of the foster care system are being given the support they need to stay in school or to gain meaningful employment. Another 100 foster youth participated this past year in academic mentoring programs provided by Children Uniting Nations.

Finally, ACHSA has volunteered to organize an ECC Resource Fair in 2011 for foster and probation youth, their caregivers, and caseworkers, modeled after the very successful first fair held in 2008. To complement this effort, ACHSA has also offered to collect baseline data on the current level of participation in after-school and summer programs and activities of the foster and probation youth in the care of ACHSA member agencies. That way, it will be possible to measure the positive role that the Resource Fair and other such efforts have on increasing after-school participation.

STRATEGY 5: Resolve remaining barriers to allow for the sharing of educational information between County departments and school districts throughout Los Angeles County.

Objective: Create an electronic data transferring process for sharing educational records with Los Angeles County case managers.

Status: As reported in our last Progress Report, ECC members and partners developed a mechanism that, for the first time, allows school districts to share education records with DCFS, the Juvenile Court and all counsel of record, and that solves, once and for all, the decade-long disagreement about how education information can be legally shared in a way that is compliant with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The required minute order language and protocol for sharing educational information has now been finalized, and all dependency court bench officers were trained on this tool in May 2010. This language is now being routinely inserted into the court orders of all foster youth entering the dependency system.

There has been a great deal of interest in this FERPA-compliant solution for sharing educational information between schools, caseworkers, and children's attorneys. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is highlighting it as a "best practice" on its website, and national agencies and organizations including the Administration for Children and Families, the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University, the American Bar Association, and Casey Family Programs have requested

a copy of the minute order language. Several organizations are sharing this language with their constituencies.

In addition, some encouraging progress has been made in the County's quest to enable education records to be electronically shared with our case management system without violating compliance with the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System regulations. The ECC Director has talked with the Commissioner for the Administration for Children and Families to gain his support for our efforts to electronically link educational information with our case management system, and for making probation officers and public health nurses eligible users of this system. Further, they also discussed the potential linking of the Probation Department and Department of Public Health electronic systems to our case management system. The ECC is now discussing these ideas with State officials, and CDSS has asked the ECC to prepare an Advanced Planning Document that proposes linking the California Department of Education and DCFS data systems electronically. CDSS is also interested in having further conversations about electronically linking other data systems within Los Angeles County. The ECC is working with the County's Commission for Children and Families, Chief Information Office, and the Children's Action Network on developing a plan for connecting several of these systems and minimizing the amount of data entry duplication which currently exists.

Finally, DCFS has been awarded a \$150,000 planning grant from the Stuart Foundation for the Los Angeles County component of that Foundation's Ready to Succeed Initiative. In our County, the initiative will study DCFS's Education Consultant Program and track the educational outcomes of the youth served, but will include a focus on the electronic sharing of individual foster youth education records. The Ready to Succeed Initiative is also being conducted in Fresno, Orange, and Sacramento counties, highlighting their electronic education data-sharing systems. The ECC, LACOE's Foster Youth Services (FYS), LAUSD and the Pasadena Unified School District have been asked to serve as partners for this Initiative, along with parent, caregiver, and youth representatives. Mental Health Advocacy Services and California State University, Los Angeles will be conducting the project evaluation.

Current Status of the Strategic Plan

As can be seen by the accomplishments noted above in each area of the ECC's strategic plan, significant progress has been made on each plan objective and, in several instances, a structure is now in place to fully implement them. As your Board directed, the purpose of the ECC is to coordinate efforts to raise the educational achievement of system youth across organizations and jurisdictions, encouraging networks of people to work together to expand best practices and fill the gaps in communities where little help or support for families is available, so that the County's children are not left behind. In this vein, DCFS has now ably assumed the lead for

Strategy 1; the Probation Department and LACOE for Strategy 2; DCFS, LACOE, and the OCC for Strategy 3; and several community partners are providing the leadership to implement Strategy 4. The ECC, with its positioning within the CEO SIB, will continue to coordinate efforts across County departments and other partners for Strategy 5. The lead organizations for the first four strategies will continue to work on completing these objectives, while the ECC will see that the fifth strategy is achieved. In addition, the ECC will concentrate on coordinating solutions to new, emerging areas of concern, as well as addressing those issues for which there is no other leadership infrastructure.

Listed below are some other examples of the ECC's coordinating activities:

Ensuring School Enrollment

The ECC is currently working with CDSS and DCFS to add language to caregiver contracts that explicitly communicates the expectation that youth in their care be immediately enrolled in and regularly attend school. The Council is also working with the Juvenile Court on ways to ensure compliance.

Promoting School Stability

The lack of school stability is frequently cited as one of the key barriers to improved academic performance of foster and probation students. Some research has even suggested that school stability may be more important than placement stability for student achievement. To address this barrier, the ECC formed a work group in the summer of 2009 to develop strategies that would promote school stability for system youth. In February 2010, the ECC approved a set of seven recommendations that show promise for strengthening school stability. These include the training of social workers, probation officers and caregivers on how to best minimize placement moves; the training of school district front-office staff on AB 490 requirements for the transfer of education records; the inclusion of school stability discussions in all case planning meetings, especially when a placement move is imminent; the establishment of internal controls to ensure that this happens; and the enforcement of State law that requires placing agencies to consider placements within a youth's school-of-origin attendance area, whenever possible, in order to promote educational stability. In May, DCFS's Executive Team adopted these policy recommendations and will work to incorporate them into casework practice in the coming months.

Reducing Truancy

The ECC is assisting the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court in setting up and staffing a task force that will identify and promote effective ways to reduce school truancy within the County by building on existing efforts. In preparation for the first meeting of the task force, the ECC has completed some research on the approaches being implemented

locally by law enforcement and other agencies, as well as across the nation. In addition, the ECC is polling each of the 81 school districts in the County with regard to the approaches and programs they are currently using to reduce truancy and Judge Nash is compiling information on court system efforts.

Of particular note is the LBUSD model (no longer operational due to budget cuts), in which a community-based center provided a full array of Wraparound services for an entire geographical area. Truant students were returned to school and interviewed to find out what they needed in order to attend school regularly. These students and their families were then provided those services (transportation, food, parenting classes, mental health services and whatever else was necessary) through the center. With the help of a \$9 million Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant received in 2008, LAUSD developed a wellness center for the 12,000 students at its Washington Preparatory School complex (which has the largest number of foster and probation youth of any complex in that school district), as well as those students attending five private schools in the surrounding community. Team decision-making meetings for DCFS students are regularly held at this center, and teachers, counselors, and community service providers all share in providing support for individual students. Schools in this particularly high-poverty, low-performance region have experienced very high numbers of suspensions and truancy. To address this need, a dedicated truancy/alternative suspension center, based on the LBUSD model, will open at the Washington Preparatory school complex in September 2010 to complement its wellness center. Led by the Second District, the ECC was a part of the planning group that secured this Federal grant, and it continues to be a part of the Core Management Team leading the implementation efforts for this grant.

Increasing Self-Sufficiency

In response to a motion by Supervisor Antonovich in March 2010, the ECC is working with the CEO to establish a Countywide Self-Sufficiency Goal for system youth. This goal should significantly improve the ability of system youth to become successful adults by ensuring that their permanency, educational, employment, social and emotional and self-sufficiency needs are met. As a first step, the ECC and CEO led the redesign of DCFS's and the Probation Department's Youth Development Services Division and developed an implementation plan that is now underway. In June, the ECC and CEO convened a broad-based committee, including several County departments and community partners, that is working on the scope and details of establishing this goal, along with realigning departmental revenues and expenditures, centralizing concurrent youth development planning services, integrating youth-centered, self-sufficiency services across County departments, and creating an evaluation mechanism for measuring its success.

Improving Services

The ECC is serving on the LACOE Foster Youth Services/Juvenile Detention Services Advisory Board and the Board's Strategic Plan Development Team, which is developing a three-year plan and funding proposal for submission to the California Department of Education FYS Program in early 2011. This plan seeks to strengthen the educational services provided to foster and probation students by FYS and restore the funding cuts made by the State to FYS in the last cycle. In May 2010, the Advisory Board approved a major shift in strategy from the general "troubleshooting" approach currently in use to one that will focus on direct service in two key areas: tutoring/academic services (identified by our State legislature and by DCFS and Probation as the top priority for foster youth) and educational case management (e.g., participation in case planning meetings, the securing of educational records, ensuring appropriate and stable school placements). The three-year plan for the State may involve changing the staffing structure at FYS to better implement the new target goals. Further, the plan proposes the addition of a tutoring/resource coordinator who would determine tutoring and academic mentoring needs, gather and maintain information on available resources for system youth, develop partnerships with educational institutions and community-based organizations to generate additional resources, and establish protocols and procedures for access to these resources. A transition plan has been developed for Fiscal Year (FY) 2010-11 that helps FYS move toward the new service priorities.

Further, in response to the motion made by Supervisors Antonovich and Knabe in October 2009, the ECC has been working with LACOE on ways of addressing the Juvenile Court Schools' structural deficit, including both fiscal and legislative strategies, and the implementation of the Auditor-Controller's recommendations. As reported to your Board in the quarterly memo of July 20, 2010, LACOE has reduced this deficit by a projected \$7.03 million for FY 2010-11.

Securing Resources

In May 2010, the ECC co-hosted a convening of several public entities, including the County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, LAUSD Board of Education and First 5 LA, as well as a number of nonprofit and philanthropic organizations, to discuss strategies for partnering on possible Promise Neighborhood Grants. Promise Neighborhoods is President Obama's anti-poverty initiative that seeks to create place-based service models, similar to the Harlem Children's Zone, in 20 cities across the country. Among other requirements, the initiative requests that applicants partner with both public and private entities within their areas, including local government, school districts, and philanthropic foundations. As the Promise Neighborhoods program components closely mirror those in ECC's *Expecting More* blueprint-the promotion of early childhood education, strong schools that are an integral part of their communities, after-school programming and data-sharing among partners-the ECC agreed to co-lead the local

planning effort. Due to the high level of interest in this initiative, several follow-up meetings were held to explore both cross-sector and cross-organizational partnerships that might help strengthen potential submissions to the Federal government, thus increasing the chances that Los Angeles County might be awarded at least one of the 20 available planning grants. Demonstrating the County's commitment to the initiative's goals, letters were provided to all ten applicant groups indicating that the CEO would provide support staff, as needed, to each grantee in Los Angeles County.

Expanding Collaboration

The ECC's Director has been asked by the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles to represent County government on the newly created Board of Community and Family Services, which is charged with enhancing and coordinating the City's efforts to serve children, youth and their families; establishing collaborations with the City, County, LAUSD, other educational and governmental entities, parent groups, and community-based organizations; and participating in the design, administration and evaluation of the City's Housing and Community Development Consolidated Plan that serves low-income communities. Being a part of this Board will assist the ECC in building the strong relationship with the City of Los Angeles government necessary to raise the academic achievement of approximately one-third of the County's youth.

As can be seen by the above, ECC members, partners, and community organizations are actively engaged in accomplishing the ECC's Blueprint and Strategic Plan goals and the Council looks forward to making further significant progress. If you have any questions or require any additional information, please let me know or your staff may contact Kathy House, Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer, at (213) 974-4530, or via e-mail at khhouse@ceo.lacounty.gov.

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August 9, 2011

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: William T Fujioka
Chief Executive Officer

PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN "EXPECTING MORE: A BLUEPRINT FOR RAISING THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF FOSTER AND PROBATION YOUTH"

At its meeting on February 14, 2006, your Board approved "*Expecting More: A Blueprint for Raising the Educational Achievement of Foster and Probation Youth*," developed by the Education Coordinating Council (ECC), and instructed the ECC to report its progress in implementing the recommendations in that document to your Board every six months. Once the ECC became a part of the Chief Executive Office (CEO), Service Integration Branch (SIB), in July 2009 and adopted a smaller staffing structure, the ECC began reporting its progress on this Plan annually. The first Progress Report was delivered to your Board on August 14, 2006; this is now the ninth report.

As your Board directed, the purpose of the ECC is to coordinate efforts to raise the educational achievement of system youth across organizations and jurisdictions, functioning as an advocate, convener and broker that mobilizes resources, resolves barriers, and spearheads innovative policies and strategies. The various members of the ECC collectively reaffirmed their commitment to this role during a strategic planning process that took place this year, grounded in the vision and recommendations set forth in *Expecting More*. In developing the updated ECC strategic plan, over 40 interviews with ECC members and stakeholders were conducted to identify opportunities that build upon prior successes, apply lessons learned, and heighten the impact of the ECC.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

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During its May 26, 2011 meeting, ECC members moved to adopt the plan which specifies five priority areas (Early Childhood Education, Youth Education and Development, School/Department Coordination and Support, Data and Information Sharing, System Accountability) and the following eight outcomes:

1. At least 90% of young DCFS children under the age of six—and the children of DCFS and probation youth—participate in high-quality early care and education programs;
2. Educational programs provided to youth in juvenile halls and camps are reformed so that they significantly increase student academic achievement;
3. System youth participate in after-school and summer enrichment activities that offer a variety of learning experiences, enhance social/emotional well-being, and provide opportunities for them to build positive and enduring relationships with caring adults;
4. DCFS and probation youth successfully transition to preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school, adult education, vocational school, and college, and smoothly transfer between schools;
5. Prevent/reduce school truancy and engage truant youth in safe and welcoming educational programs;
6. Departments and schools work in concert to provide system youth with the education and supports they need to attain future success;
7. Share education information electronically across systems; and
8. Courts regularly track and monitor youths' educational plans and progress and hold accountable those most responsible for youths' increased educational achievement—including child welfare workers, probation officers, attorneys, caregivers, parents, school personnel, and the youth themselves.

The ECC continues to implement various activities to achieve these outcomes. Some key accomplishments are:

Priority Area 1: Early Childhood Education

Outcome #1: At least 90% of young DCFS children under the age of six—and the children of DCFS and probation youth—participate in high-quality early care education programs

DCFS has made significant gains towards this outcome by developing an innovative and user-friendly electronic referral system to identify and connect three and four year-old children under its supervision to the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Head Start program. The system, developed over the course of two years and initially piloted in DCFS' Glendora and Compton regional offices during May 2011, is now operational in all 18 DCFS regional offices. The "two-click" system is simple to use and requires minimal training. After obtaining caregiver consent, Children's Social Workers can quickly initiate a referral to Head Start for children from their respective caseloads by logging on to the system, followed by a simple click of a button. No additional data entry or work is required. In turn, LACOE Head Start, one of the largest Head Start grantees in the nation, is fully committed to making this partnership work and has designated two staff members to receive and route DCFS' electronic referrals to the preschool program most accessible to each child. **In just one month, DCFS has referred over 450 children to LACOE Head Start using this new system.** The South County regional office has done a particularly effective job, having contacted approximately 98% of caregivers and families caring for children not enrolled in preschool to request their consent for referral to LACOE Head Start. These accomplishments are also relevant to DCFS' focus on helping children attain self-sufficiency by supporting families' and caregivers' connection to early education programs. Efforts are underway to begin tracking enrollment information periodically and to integrate additional early care and education networks into the referral system, such as Los Angeles Universal Preschool and LAUSD's State Preschool Program.

The ECC is supporting DCFS' efforts to include information promoting the enrollment of children in early education programs in caregiver agreements and working with the Dependency Court so that Court Minute Orders related to children between three and five years of age include similar information. Additionally, your Board's approval of the newly updated *Child Care Policy Framework* in March 2011, developed by the Office of Child Care (OACC) in conjunction with the Policy Roundtable for Child Care, paves the way for increased Countywide collaboration to meet this outcome. One of its key components which is also related to the Countywide Youth Self-Sufficiency Initiative—the Strengthening Families Approach (SFA)—is designed to help a broad array of departments and programs enhance child development, increase family stability, and prevent child abuse/neglect among children ages birth to five by incorporating the following five Protective Factors into their work with families: parental resilience; social connections; knowledge of parenting and child development; concrete support in times of need; and children's social and emotional competence. The ECC is partnering with the OCC, the Center for the Study of Social Policy, and other local partners to establish a multidisciplinary learning community that will integrate the SFA and Protective Factors into County departments' work with children and families. As a first step, in June 2011 a delegation from Los Angeles, including representatives from the CEO, ECC, DCFS, DMH, OCC, First 5 LA, and the Partnership for Early Childhood Investment, joined over 300 attendees at the Strengthening Families Leadership Summit to develop a more in-depth understanding of the

SFA and exchange implementation ideas with representatives from over 30 states. Next steps include developing and testing local implementation strategies.

Priority Area 2: Youth Education and Development

Outcome #2: Educational programs provided to youth in juvenile halls and camps will be reformed so that they significantly increase student academic achievement

On October 14, 2008, your Board adopted the Comprehensive Educational Reform Report which contained 35 recommendations designed to improve the educational outcomes for youth incarcerated in the County's juvenile halls and camps. Created through a motion by Supervisor Knabe, the Comprehensive Educational Reform Committee (CERC), of which the ECC is a member, continues to oversee the implementation of the reforms.

Progress has been made in a number of areas, with one of the most impressive being the piloting of an innovative approach for providing educational curriculum to at-risk youth at the probation camp school of Camp Scott/Scudder. In September 2010, the *Road to Success Academy* was launched by LACOE, reaching over 100 young women detained at Camp Scott/Scudder in Saugus. The *Academy* is designed to address the many special needs and unique circumstances of girls in the juvenile justice system. The curriculum uses a project-based approach, based on a national educational model entitled *Big Picture Learning*, which engages students in thematic interdisciplinary learning around essential questions that invite them to delve into content in more direct and meaningful ways. The school program involves daily and special activities to promote self-esteem and empower young women to make positive choices and behavioral changes.

Outcome #3: System youth participate in after-school and summer enrichment activities that offer a variety of learning experiences, enhance social/emotional well-being, and provide opportunities for them to build positive and enduring relationships with caring adults

DCFS' Youth Development Services implemented six computer training camps Countywide from May through June 2011 for approximately 170 youth who were either college-bound or already attending college. The training sessions, designed to equip foster youth with the technology and skills needed to successfully transition to higher education settings, took place on weekends over the course of one or two days. Each youth received a free laptop computer, flash drive, printer, and computer software. Trainers provided hands-on instruction to help youth operate their new laptops and maximize their use of pre-loaded software programs to complete a variety of functions, such as tracking expenditures and creating PowerPoint presentations for school.

LAUSD's Beyond the Bell program is also continuing to make special outreach efforts to engage foster youth in summer activities that support achievement and promote social,

emotional, and physical development in a safe environment. Beyond the Bell has set a goal of enrolling at least 1,000 foster youth by the end of summer, followed by an evaluation of enrollment outcomes.

The First Star UCLA Bruin Guardian Scholars launched a summer academy in June 2011, an intense, free 5-week residential program for foster youth entering the ninth grade. This comprehensive college immersion program engages youth in fun and active learning opportunities, including academic courses for college credit, independent studies, field trips, social and cultural activities. The program also provides supervised housing on campus to give youth the full university experience, and offers individualized attention through a caring adult network, foster alumni, and extensive young adult mentorships. The ECC actively supported youth recruitment efforts, posting application materials on its website and distributing information to constituents. The program reached its goal of recruiting 30 foster youth all of which successfully graduated on August 5th. Plans are underway to launch another summer academy in 2012.

Furthermore, the Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA) convened a Countywide Resource Fair for DCFS and probation youth at the California Endowment on June 28, 2011, modeled after the ECC's Fair in 2008. Over 600 youth and their caregivers participated in this successful all-day event and were connected to approximately 60 vendors offering everything from free arts and literacy programs to legal services, housing, jobs, and on-site applications for free birth certificates. The fair also offered complimentary dental, vision and Planned Parenthood screenings, and provided hands-on application assistance for Medi-Cal and CalFresh benefits. Youth participated in workshops that took place throughout the day on various topics such as obtaining financial aid for college, sealing juvenile delinquency records, money management and resume writing. Representatives from several organizations—including the ECC, DCFS, Probation, the Interagency Council of Child Abuse and Neglect, California Youth Connection (CYC), and several group homes—did the planning for this fair. Major donors included all members of your Board, Senator Carol Liu, ACHSA, CYC, DCFS and Probation.

Outcome #4: DCFS and probation youth successfully transition to preschool, elementary school, middle school, high school, adult education, vocational school, and college, and smoothly transfer between schools

LAUSD's Foster Care Unit initiated the new Pathways to College program this year to increase the number of foster and probation youth who successfully enroll and transition to college. Counselors from this specialized unit met with 129 students who expressed an interest in attending college to discuss career choices, college preferences, financial aid and housing options. Youth also received guidance and help completing college admissions, financial aid, scholarship, and housing applications. As a result, approximately 90% of students applied and were accepted to colleges. Of these youth, 22 received college acceptance letters and will attend four-year universities during fall 2011.

The Camp-to-Community Transition Task Force, convened and chaired by the Delinquency Court, continues to coordinate various activities to support probation youths' reentry into their home communities. The six school districts represented on the Task Force, who are also members of the ECC, are developing procedures to clearly articulate how probation youth returning from camp will be effectively transitioned back to their schools. The Task Force is also in the process of revising Probation's multi-disciplinary team meeting procedures and case plans to incorporate transition planning as early on as possible and address transition throughout youths' camp stay. Once revisions are finalized, the new document and procedures will be rolled out Countywide to all camps. Additionally, the CEO is exploring integrating the Task Force with the Gang Violence Reduction Initiative to address juvenile reentry issues in a cohesive manner.

Outcome #5: Prevent/reduce school truancy and engage truant youth in safe and welcoming educational programs

Concerned about the over 30,000 truancy (daytime curfew violation) citations handled each year by the Informal Juvenile and Traffic Court (IJTC), Judge Nash, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court and the ECC's Vice Chair, launched a Truancy Task Force (TTF) in the fall of 2010 to come up with alternative ways of dealing with this issue. Staffed by the ECC, this task force brings together the juvenile courts, law enforcement, the legal community, City of Los Angeles, DCFS, Probation, schools, advocacy organizations and community-based service providers to develop coordinated Countywide approaches/practices that would keep truant youth out of the court system as much as possible and provide useful tools for dependency and delinquency court judges. The TTF devoted its first meetings to investigating what kinds of approaches already exist in the County and, of these, which ones appear to be effective and which ones are not. Its final data-gathering meetings will be held in August 2011, with the first focusing on successful approaches being used in other jurisdictions across the U.S. and the second—a Youth Hearing—providing youth the opportunity to relate their experiences with truancy laws and offer recommendations for alternative solutions. In September 2011, the TTF will begin determining which of the approaches and practices it has looked at could or should be promoted in the County, and what policies and/or collaborations would be needed for implementing them.

Since the creation of the TTF, there have already been a couple of quick successes. First, the LAPD issued a new directive in the spring of 2011 that instructs officers to consider the *spirit* of the existing daytime curfew violation ordinance rather than just its strict enforcement. Officers must now ask students their age and if they have a valid excuse for being in a public place during school hours before determining that they are violating the ordinance; not enforce the ordinance when students are making a good faith effort to get to school, regardless of their tardiness; return students encountered during school hours to their school when that is feasible; not issue citations or make an arrest unless they reasonably believe that an offense has occurred and, in any case, not take these actions on school grounds. Several TTF members helped the LAPD develop this directive.

Second, in response to concerns expressed at TTF meetings about the Court's not receiving adequate school attendance information, LAUSD arranged to send its mobile Grad Van to the Children's Court on July 21, 2011, and at least monthly thereafter. This van houses two LAUSD staff and wireless computers directly connected to that district's data system. School attendance and all other educational records can be printed out, on the spot, for judicial officers, children's attorneys, DCFS social workers, parents, caregivers, holders of education rights, and Court Appointed Special Advocates who present a minute order authorizing their legal status. If there is sufficient demand for this easy access to educational information, LAUSD will send the Grad Van out as often as weekly, and will also work with the Delinquency Court and the Probation Department to offer the same service at locations convenient to them.

Priority Area 3: School/Department Coordination and Support

Outcome #6: Departments and schools work in concert to provide system youth with the education and supports they need to attain future success

Conceived by the First Supervisorial District, the Gloria Molina Foster Youth Education Program (GMFYEP), now in its third year of implementation, continues to demonstrate how collaboration between school systems and DCFS can improve the educational outcomes of foster youth and contribute to their self-sufficiency. The project has served over 300 foster youth to date and is now implemented across six school districts, having expanded to two additional districts this year – Azusa Unified School District in October 2010 and El Rancho Unified School District in May 2011. Additionally, in February 2011, the GMFYEP Protocols and Procedures Manual was published and contains all of the necessary information for program expansion to additional school districts. The Manual includes a sample MOU between DCFS and a participating school district, an outline of the roles and responsibilities of all staff, a description of the four types of program teams and who should be involved in each, an educational history checklist, educational assessment and case plan forms, a file auditing and quality assurance tool and a special education tracking form. In May 2011, the project also developed credit recovery guidelines to help adults who work with foster youth recover high school course credits completed while they were attending other schools or school districts. The ECC has distributed these credit recovery guidelines to its constituents and has posted a copy on its website (www.educationcoordinatingcouncil.org).

The GMFYEP continues to be recognized for championing education for foster youth, and during this reporting period was profiled in news articles from *Education Week*, the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*, and the *Whittier Daily News* for its exemplary accomplishments. The following quote from a foster youth who participated in the GMFYEP captures the impact it has had on her life: "I am not another statistic, a messed-up kid that is going to end up on the streets with no job or education. I can accomplish anything, no matter what I am going through."

In addition to supporting the GMFYEP's implementation, the ECC is also working with DCFS and the State Department of Social Services to include language in caregiver contracts to require that foster youth be immediately enrolled in school, as mandated by AB 490, and ensure regular school attendance.

LAUSD, in partnership with DCFS, DMH, Probation, and the Human Relations Commission, has successfully implemented the second year of the federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SSHS) grant in Supervisorial District 2. Grant activities target the George Washington Preparatory High School (GWPHS) complex, which has the largest number of foster and probation youth within LAUSD, and the 17 elementary, middle, private and continuation schools that feed students into it. SSHS has increased the availability and accessibility of mental health services for youth by placing seven Wellness Facilitators at school sites who help identify and connect students and their families to mental health services. DMH has stepped forward and placed a System Navigator at GWPHS this year to ensure high-need youth are able to access more intensive supports. DCFS team decision making meetings (TDMs) continue taking place at GWPHS and were expanded to two middle schools (Heart and Clay Middle Schools). Additionally, the project has developed an innovative approach that uses school performance indicators (attendance, suspensions and grades) to trigger a TDM for foster youth. Lastly, the Human Relations Commission established a new elective course on social justice, anti-bullying, and harassment at GWPHS in the fall of 2010. This class, and an accompanying *No Haters* afterschool club for middle and high school youth, has resulted in a decrease of students reporting they feel bullied at school. The Second Supervisorial District and ECC played a key role in helping secure this grant, and the ECC continues to be involved in overseeing its implementation.

LACOE's Foster Youth Services (FYS) has submitted an application for funding for fiscal years 2011-14 to the California Department of Education (CDE), soliciting a maximum of \$2.1 million to provide foster youth with tutoring, educational case management, and transitional services. The total amount solicited represents a 27% budget reduction from LACOE FYS' previous allocation, due to budget constraints put forth by the CDE. This application is the culmination of an intensive 18 month planning process during which the ECC and other LACOE FYS local advisory group members canvassed existing resources and service gaps to ultimately identify the three service priorities. In December 2010, LACOE FYS successfully launched a pilot to field test case management services in conjunction with the Countywide Youth Self-Sufficiency Initiative and has co-located FYS staff members in five DCFS regional offices (Belvedere, Glendora, South County, San Fernando Valley and Vermont Corridor). These individuals participate in multi-disciplinary team meetings, provide education consultation services, and collaborate with DCFS social workers, education consultants, and Probation staff to help youth reach their education objectives. Next steps include expanding the pilot to additional DCFS regional offices, contingent upon funding from the CDE.

Priority Area 4: Data and Information Sharing

Outcome #7: Share education information electronically across systems

Last year, the ECC developed a mechanism that, for the first time, allowed school districts to share education records with DCFS, the Juvenile Court and all counsel of record, and that solves once and for all, the decade-long disagreement about how education information can be legally shared in a way that is compliant with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This year, the ECC worked with the Delinquency Court and representatives of the District Attorney, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, LAUSD, LACOE, County Counsel, Probation Department, and other key stakeholders to finalize similar FERPA-compliant language that can be inserted into delinquency court minute orders allowing school districts to share education records with the Probation Department, the Juvenile Court, and all counsel of record. Once finalized, the ECC will work with the Juvenile Court to include this language electronically into delinquency judicial officers' computer systems.

Additionally, the ECC secured conceptual approval from the State to electronically share educational data with other County departments. The ECC is working closely with the Service Integration Branch to explore avenues for creating a platform that would facilitate this type of data-sharing. A few private foundations have expressed an interest in investing in a platform that would support the electronic sharing of these records.

Priority Area 5: System Accountability

Outcome #8: Courts regularly track and monitor youths' educational plans and progress and hold accountable those most responsible for youths' increased educational achievement—including child welfare workers, probation officers, attorneys, caregivers, parents, school personnel, and the youth themselves

This priority area and corresponding outcome, a new addition to the ECC's updated strategic plan, was developed with and embraced by the Juvenile Court in recognition of the unique role it fulfills in overseeing and holding the various systems and individuals serving youth accountable for their educational success. A number of activities are already underway that exemplify the Court's commitment to this outcome. For example, this year the Juvenile Court has stepped up to lead the Truancy Taskforce and the Camp-to-Community Task Force. Also, the Delinquency Court has initiated a new program that recruits and trains community volunteers to be education rights holders for youth who have no parent or caregiver capable or available to educationally advocate for them. Additionally, these voluntary education rights holders are prepared to serve as educational mentors for parents and caregivers, modeling effective and appropriate interactions with representatives from the school their child attends. There is now a pool of 23 individuals that have completed this training process and are ready to be appointed by the Court to serve

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designated families for at least one school year. Next steps include publicizing the availability of these volunteers, updating the Juvenile Court's Delinquency Education Protocol to clearly state the responsibilities of each partner in the delinquency court, and defining the procedure for appointing education rights holders. As demand for additional volunteer education rights holders increases, more trainings will be conducted so that, ultimately, no youth in the delinquency system is left without a viable education rights holder.

As evidenced by all the of above, ECC member agencies, partners, and community organizations are actively engaged in achieving the ECC's *Blueprint* and Strategic Plan goals and outcomes. The Council looks forward to making further significant progress.

If you have any questions or require any additional information, please let me know or your staff may contact Trish Ploehn, Assistant Chief Executive Officer, at (213) 974-4532 or via e-mail at tploehn@ceo.lacounty.gov.

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